

M. R.

THE
TRUE GROUNDS
OF THE *12532*
B E N E F I T S *57*
OF
JESUS CHRIST,
AS HE IS

The SAVIOUR of all MANKIND.

Extracted from the WRITINGS of a late
EMINENT DIVINE.

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THE
TRUE GROUNDS
Of the BENEFITS of
JESUS CHRIST.

IT is the fundamental Doctrine, or rather the *known* Foundation of all *reveal'd* Religion, and the *unknown* Foundation of all natural Piety and Goodness; that Jesus Christ is the *second Adam*: That he is a *common Head*, or *Parent*, or *Person* to all Mankind, in the same Manner, as *Adam* is the common *Head*, or *Parent*, or *Person* to all Mankind.

That a real *Birth*, *Life*, *Nature*, and true *Man*, is in the same *Truth* and *Reality* deriv'd to us from this our *second Adam*, as a real *Birth*, and *Life*, and *Nature* is deriv'd to us from our first *Adam*. And that as without any *Figure* or *Metaphor* of Speech we are all said to be born of *Adam*, and descended
from

from him, so we are all in the same Dependance upon our *second Adam*, really and not figuratively born of him, and have our Descent from him; Spirit of his Spirit, Life of his Life, in the same Truth and Reality, as every Man has the Nature of the first *Adam*.

And herein is seen the infinite Depth of Divine Love and Goodness to Mankind, who though they were by the Condition of their Creation to be deriv'd from one *Head* or *Parent*, and to take his *State* of Perfection or Imperfection; yet were by the Goodness and Care of God for them, provided from the very Beginning, with a *second Parent*, or common Head, who after the *Fall* of the first, and the fallen State that he had brought upon his Posterity, should be a *common Restorer*, and put it in every Man's Power to have the same Choice of Life and Death, as the first Man had; that so, they who were lost before they were born, and were made Inheritors of a miserable Nature without their Choice, might have a Divine Life restor'd to them in a *second Parent*, which should not be in the Power of any one to lose for them, but should depend entirely upon their *own Will and Desire* of it, upon their *own Faith*, and *Hope*, and *Hungering* after it.

This eternal and immutable Truth, worthy of being written in capital Letters of Gold,

Gold, is the Foundation of all reveal'd and natural Religion; and a standing Monument of God's universal Goodness and Love to all Mankind, and such as is sufficient to make all Men rejoice and give praise to God.

For by this Truth, all that seems hard and cruel to human Reason, that the Posterity of *Adam* should be involved in the Consequences of their first Father's Fall, (yet how could it be otherwise?) all this, I say, is made a wonderful Scene of Love, as soon as we consider, that all Mankind were redeem'd as soon as they were lost, and that their Redemption was as *early*, as universal, and as extensive in its Effects, as the Fall was. And that no Son of *Adam* is left to inherit a *poor, earthly, perishable, corrupt* Nature from him, without having it in his choice to be *born again* of a second *Adam*, and restor'd, with Advantage, to all the Riches, and Treasures, and Blessings of a divine and paradisaical Nature, which were lost without his Consent.

There is something so amazingly loving and merciful in this Conduct of divine Providence over Mankind, that I cannot help thinking, no one can calmly consider it in the Quiet of his Mind, without having all his Infidelity melted down by it. And that such an *Act of general Pardon*, as early as the

first Sin, and a new Parent provided for us, to be our Parent by *Choice and Faith*, as soon as our first Parent had undone us without our Consent: Such an Act of Pardon being the Beginning and Foundation of all reveal'd Religion, and of every Thing that is afterwards reveal'd in it, has surely enough in it, if once known, to make reveal'd Religion the Joy, and Comfort, and Desire of every Man's Heart. What would I give that I could but dart one Ray of this Truth into every Unbeliever's Heart; for the smallest Ray of it, would do to every one as the *Light that fell from Heaven* did to St. Paul, it would make as it were *Scales fall from his Eyes*: And he would find that all *Books and Systems* of Infidelity, were as unreasonable in themselves, and as hurtful to him, as those Commissions were which *Paul* had from the High-Priest to bind all that called on the Name of Christ.

But to proceed :

That Jesus Christ is thus the Saviour and universal Redeemer of all Mankind, that he is the second *Adam* or Parent, giving a new Birth and Life to all that which was extinguish'd and lost by *Adam*; restoring *Adam* himself, and in him all Mankind to a Possibility of being born again, by their own *Will, Choice, Faith, and Desire*; and that reveal'd Religion began with the Declaration of this Redemption,

Redemption, and has reveal'd nothing but for the Sake and Support of it, is a Truth sufficiently attested by Scripture.

The Declaration which God made to *Adam* immediately after his Fall, of *a Seed of the Woman to bruise the Serpent's Head*, was a Declaration of *Pardon* and *Redemption* to *Adam*, and in him to all Mankind; for what he said to *Adam*, that he said to all that were in the Loins of *Adam*; who, as they fell in his Fall, before they were born, without the Possibility of any one Man's being exempted from it; so were they all put into his State of Pardon and Redemption before they were born, without the Possibility of any one Man's being excluded, or left out of it.

Thus reveal'd Religion *begins* with an Offer of a *second Adam*, and upon the Foot of an *universal* Pardon and Redemption to all Mankind. Every Son of *Adam* is in the same Covenant with God that *Adam* was, and has the same *Bruiser* of the Serpent as *near* to him, as he was to *Adam*, and declar'd to be his Redeemer, in the same Degree as he was declar'd to be the Redeemer of *Adam*.

And who would seek for Arguments against such a Saviour? Or who would cavil at a *reveal'd Religion*, that has no other Beginning or End, but to reveal an *universal Redemption*? Or who can enough call upon
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all the Creation, Heaven and Earth, Angels and Men, and every Thing that hath Breath, to praise the Lord, for such Salvation? You must forgive these little Digressions, for I want so much to touch the Heart of my Reader, and make him in love with God, and his own Salvation in Christ Jesus, that I know not how to content myself with bare Arguments.

Now this Declaration of God to *Adam*, of his Pardon and Redemption by the Seed of the Woman, is not to be consider'd, as we consider the *Declaration* of a *Pardon* made by some great *Prince* to an offending *Subject*, which is only a Declaration of *Words*, that are heard only with our outward Ears, and of a Person that is entirely distinct from us.

God's pardoning a Sinner, or redeeming fallen Man, has nothing like this in it. If this offending Subject had his *Life*, and *Breath*, and *Being* in and from this great Prince, or could be said to *live and move, and have his Being in him*, it would be easy nay, necessary to believe, that his Declaration of Pardon to him, must be something very different from a Pardon of Words, and must signify some *inward Effect*, or *Change*, or new *State* of Existence in his Prince.

Now this Declaration of God's Pardon and Reconciliation to *Adam*, and in him to all Mankind, is not the Declaration of a Being

ing that is *out of*, or *separate* from us, but of a God in whom *we live, and move, and have our Being*; who is the *Center* of that which is most *Central* in us, the *Life* of our *Life*, the *Spirit* of our *Spirit*: His Declaration therefore of Pardon is not a Declaration of *Words*, or of a Being that is separate from us, but must signify some inward *Change*, or new *State* of our Existence in him, or that *he is* to us, and in us, that which *he was not* before he pardoned us. For his Words are Power, and what he speaks he acts, and what he acts he acts not *out of* us, but in the *inmost Essence* of our Being, because so we exist in him and he in us.

If God at the Fall, had said, *Let us save Man*, the same had been effected, as when he said, *Let us make Man*.

When therefore God said to *Adam* and *Eve*, *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Head of the Serpent*, what was said, was done; and it was the same Thing, had the same Meaning and Effect, as if he had said, *Be ye henceforth in a State of Salvation, and let the redeeming, conquering Seed of the Woman from this time begin to have Power in you, and to be in you a Strength and Might against the Serpent*. And what he said was done; as when he said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*.

Thus

Thus this Declaration of Pardon and Redemption made by God to *Adam*, and, in him, to all his Posterity, was not *solely* a Promise of something to come, or of a Pardon that was at a Distance, no more than it was the Promise of a God that was at a Distance from him; but the Declaration of something then *inwardly done and given*, by a God inwardly present in him, and signify'd no less than God's *seeking* and *manifesting* himself again to a Creature, that had *lost* him as his God and *only Good*.

For how can the Anger of that Being, *in whom we live and move, and have our Being*, be only an Anger of *Words*, or made known to us only by Words? Or how can it be any Thing else, but some *inward Loss* of that which is our *Good* in him?

Or how can his Pardon, be only a Pardon of *Words*, or something heard only with our Ears? Or how can it be any Thing else, but his *restoring* that to us, or his *reviving* that in us, which *makes* us again capable of *finding* him our God and *only Good*.

Therefore God's Declaration of Pardon to *Adam*, was not barely a Promise of something to come, but the Pardon itself; and was the *real Communication* of something to *Adam*, which made him *capable* of enjoying God as his *Good*, which he had not when he *wanted* to be pardoned, and which he could not have,

have, if God was in a State of *Anger* with him.

Now had not God spoken this Pardon and Reconciliation to *Adam* after his Fall, he had been in the Condition of the *Deep*, when it was said, *Darkness was upon the Face of the Deep*.

Nay, it had been much worse with him; for had not God made this Declaration of Pardon and Redemption to him at that Time, that is, had he not done *inwardly* in the *Depth* of his Soul, something like that which he did to the *Darkness* of the *Deep*, when he spoke *Light* into it, *Adam* and *Eve*, and all their Posterity, had been inwardly mere *Devils*, and outwardly mere *Beasts*, a motly Mixture of both, till the *Beast* fell into the *Earth*, and the *Soul* to the State of *Devils*,

For had not God thus in the Beginning of the Fall, before any Man was born into the World of *Adam* and *Eve*, had he not spoke Pardon and Redemption unto *Adam* and *Eve*; neither they, nor any of their Posterity had been *capable* of any *Faith*, or *Hope*, or *Desire* of God, but had liv'd as much without all *Conscience*, or *Instinct* of Goodness, as the *Beasts* of the *Earth* and *Devils* do.

Therefore God redeemed Man, that is, restor'd to him a Power of being again his Creature, or a Power of *knowing* and *finding* him to be his *God*, when he said,
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the Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's Head.

He redeemed him by *communicating* to him a *Sense*, a *Feeling*, and a *Desire* of God, by communicating to him a *Capacity* to enjoy him as his *only Good*, by sowing into him a *Seed* of the Woman, a *Spark* of Life, an *Instinct* of Goodness, a *Taste* of Heaven, a *Principle* of Holiness, a *Touch* of Love, the *Pearl* of the Gospel, the *Pledge* of Immortality, the *bidden Kingdom* of God.

For all these Expressions of a Seed, a Spark, an Instinct, a Principle, a Pearl and Kingdom, are insufficient to express *that inward Treasure* of the Soul, and *Fund* of everlasting Happiness, which God in the Beginning of the Redemption, or as his Act of Redemption, communicated to Man.

Now in this Degree of Redemption is every Creature that is born of *Adam*; he has this Kingdom of God in his Soul, as a *Grain of Mustard-Seed*, as a *Spark* of Life, as a *Pledge* of Immortality, as his *Attraction* to God: If he *tramples* this *Pearl* under his Feet, if he will *choak* this Word, if he will *put out* this Spark, if he will *resist* this Attraction; then his Destruction is from himself; and when the Carcass of Flesh and Blood falls off from him, he must find himself in his *own Hell*, and must have the Misery of a *darkned, anxious, fiery, self-tormented*

mented Nature for ever, that would not suffer itself to be redeemed.

But if he will consent to his Redemption, and co-operate with that *inward Redeemer* which God has put into his Soul, if he will suffer his Spark to *kindle*, his *Instinct* of Goodness to *spread* itself, the Light of Life to *arise* in him, the Voice of God to be *heard* in him; then will the *Divine* Life, the *inward* Man, be brought forth in him; and when his Body breaks off, Heaven will be made *manifest* in his Soul, and he will fall into all the Fulness of God. The *Son* of God will be his *Light*, the *Holy Spirit* will *breathe* in him, and the Power and Omnipotency of the *Father*, will be Life and Strength in him; and thus in the compleatest Sense of the Words, shall he *ever live and move, and have his being* in God.

And now, my dear Reader, what shall I say to you? How shall I do that, which I most of all desire to do, touch your Heart? Or how can your Heart be untouch'd with this affecting View of the Mercies of God in Christ Jesus, and of the Riches and Treasures which lie hid in your own Soul, wanting nothing but your own Consent and good Wishes to be manifested in you?

But it may be, modern *Infidelity* has stole into your Heart, and so you lie starving in the midst of Plenty, chusing rather to famish

on the *dry Husks of Reason, Dispute, and Infidelity*, than to have this Divine Life, this Riches of your own Soul, discover'd to you on the Terms of the Gospel. It may be you have buried this *Spark of Life, this inward Man*, and have heap'd all the Earth upon him that you can get, that you have *seal'd* the Stone of his *Sepulchre*, and have set your greatest Enemy, a *reasoning Infidelity*, upon the *Watch*, to dispute, wrangle and deny every Doctrine of Scripture, *that as a good Angel would roll away the Stone of the Sepulchre, and let your inward Redeemer arise in you.*

If this is your Case, if you have let a *reasoning Infidelity* into your Heart, you know not what Mischief you have let into it; for the Denial of the Gospel reaches much further, and is more extensive than you imagine.

For to deny Jesus Christ, is to deny *your Share* in the first Pardon of God to Man, it is returning into the first State of the *Fall*, and refusing to be a Partner with *Adam* in his State of Forgiveness; it is going over to the Side of the Serpent, and declaring that you will not enter into Peace with God on the Terms of *bruising his Head*; for Jesus Christ that calls upon you in the *Gospel*, is that same Christ which became *Adam's Pardon*, and if you reject him in the *Gospel*,

it is rejecting him from the Beginning; and is saying, that you will have no Share in that Salvation which was granted to *Adam*, and in him to all Mankind. Nay, what is still more, if you reject the *Saviour* offer'd to you in the *Gospel*, you reject *all that* which makes you differ from a *Devil*; for that Saviour which speaks to you in the Gospel, is that very same *inward Light of your Mind*, which makes you now differ from a Devil; for had you *nothing* of that Jesus Christ in you, whom you reject in the Gospel, you would be in the same *dark Malignity*, and *self-tormenting Wretchedness*, in which every diabolical Nature is.

To refuse him that speaketh to you in the Gospel, is not barely to renounce a certain *particular Religion* revealed by God at a certain Time, it is not barely to reject Christ as *come* in the *Flesh*; but it is rejecting *all* that God has ever *transacted* with Man, it is renouncing all that is *Divine* and *Good* within you, all that God inwardly speaks and teaches in the Depth of your Soul; it is saying that you will have no Benefit from the *good Workings* or *Motions* of your own Heart, or the *Instincts* of Goodness that are stirring in it; for Jesus Christ that calls you to Repentance in the Gospel, is the *very same* blessed Saviour, that *warns*, *reproves*, and *preaches* Repentance in the inmost Essence of your Spirit. For it
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is a Deceit of the grossest Kind, to think that Christ came only as our Saviour, when he came in the *Flesh*, or that he only speaks to us that which is *outwardly* spoken in the Gospel; for he always was *That* in every Man that *saved* him from being entirely a diabolical Nature, and always was as really the Teacher and Mover of all that is good *within* you, as he was the Teacher of the *Gospel*. Therefore to reject him as your Saviour, to refuse him as such, and to desire to be without him, is in reality to desire to be in *Hell*, to have the *Darkness* and *Distress* of diabolical Beings, it is desiring to be without any *Light of God* upon your Mind, or any *Instincts* of Goodness stirring in your Heart.

And if this is not the *immediate Effect* of your Infidelity, if you don't immediately find that the Denial of Christ, is *putting out* all the Light within you; 'tis because Christ is Love, and will be so good towards you, as to continue his inward Light to you, though you reject his outward Light of the Gospel.

But, my Friend, be wise in Time, for this Goodness will continue but a Time; don't let a *poor worthless* Infidelity beguile you to *eat the Dust* of the Earth with the Serpent, when God has provided for you the *Bread of Life*. For this Time of Goodness
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and Forbearance will soon be over, and if the End of it finds you in your Infidelity, rejecting the Benefits of Christ, you will then see the whole of all you desir'd, you will be without Christ, you will find that all is gone with him, and that you will have nothing left, but that Nature which is the Torment of Hell.

You now think, that because you can frame *Ideas* of Virtue, and exert some *Acts* of Goodness, though you reject all Faith in Christ, that therefore he is not *necessary* to your Virtue and Happiness; but your miserable Mistake lies here, that you think Christ is only he that preached the Gospel, and that it is not him that speaks and moves every good Thought or Word that is spoken in you, but that you have a Light and Goodness of your own. But when this Time is over, and you have spent your Hour of Grace, Christ will no longer stand knocking at the Door of your Heart, and then you will find, that you are as empty of all *inward Light*, as you are of the Gospel, and that by rejecting him as your Saviour, you have rejected all that was *Divine* and *Good* within you.

Infidelity therefore is a much *deeper* Evil than you may imagine, it denies and rejects more than you think of; you may intend by it only to change the Light of the *Gospel* for

the Light of *Reason*, but Christ will not be divided by your Intention; he is the *one only* Light of Men, the same in the *Heart* that he is in the *Gospel*, and though you may now think that you have *two Teachers*, because he teaches in two Places, • and therefore may adhere to one, and reject the other; yet this is a Deceit that can last no longer than the Disputings of this World last with you.

When the Veil of Flesh and Blood is pulled off, and you must stand in the Nakedness of your Soul before God; then you will know that these *two Lights* are only one, and that neither of them can be rejected by itself. These Lights appear now as two, only because God is so good as to leave no Part of you *untry'd*, but presses the Kingdom of Heaven upon you, both from within, and from without.

The eternal *Word*, the *Son* of God, took human Nature upon him, work'd all his Miracles, taught all his Doctrines, underwent all his Sufferings, to make that Light of the Mind, which *every Man that cometh into the World*, had received from him, effectual to their Salvation; therefore the Light of the Gospel, and the Light of the Mind, are one, as Christ is one, whether he speaks, to you inwardly or outwardly. If therefore you reject Christ in the utmost Efforts of his Goodness to save you, you will find that the
renouncing

renouncing of Christ, is renouncing all that you have from him, and that all the good Light of your Mind, call it what you will, as it was his, is all rejected with him, and that nothing is left in that Soul, where he is not, but mere Darknes.

But to return to my Subject; what I have said above of God's Covenant with *Adam*, and the Redemption granted to him, is God's Covenant with all Mankind, and therefore thus far all Mankind are the redeemed of Jesus. There is no Partiality in God, no Election of one People to Salvation, and Dereliction of another to their own Misery. As all fell and died in *Adam*, so all were restored in his Restoration.

Thus says the Apostle, *As by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all to Condemnation; even so by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all Men unto Justification of Life.**

But you will perhaps say, How does it appear, that this first Covenant of God with Mankind, or Redemption of all Men in the Redemption of *Adam*, is the Redemption in and by Jesus Christ?

I may better ask you, Where you can have the smallest Reason even to suspect the contrary? For is not the *Seed of the Woman*, Jesus Christ? And if our Salvation then began,

* Rom. v. 18.

began, when God made Declaration of the *saving Power* of this Seed, it is plain, that Christ's Redemption then began in Mankind, that he was thenceforward in every Man as a *Spark* of Life, that as a *secret Power*, should bruise the Serpent, and support us against him, till he in the Fulness of Time should, in the *Fulness of the Promise*, become such a Seed of the Woman, as should openly triumph over Death and Hell, and all the Kingdom of the Serpent. For if it was Christ that became *Adam's* Redeemer in the promised Seed, if he had actually the Power of that Salvation manifested in his Soul, and was in a State of Redemption, because Christ was become the Ransom and Life of his Soul; then all the Sons of *Adam*, from the first to the last, are in *Adam's* State of Covenant with God through Jesus Christ, and have the Seed of the Woman doing *all that* for them, which it did for *Adam*.

Again, does not the Gospel expressly say, that Jesus Christ is the *true Light which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*? Therefore Jesus Christ is in every Man that cometh into the World, and every Son of *Adam* is in a State of Redemption in and by Jesus Christ, and every Son of *Adam* has received *that same* from Jesus Christ, which *Adam* received from him, *viz.* an *inward Light* of Life, a *Beginning* of his Salvation,
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an *actual Power* or Strength to resist the Serpent; therefore Jesus Christ, as he is the Light and Life of Men, as he is the Bruiser of the Serpent, as he is the Power of Salvation, is and ever was the *free Gift of God unto all Men.*

Again, Does not the Scripture teach us, that God is as well the God of the *Gentiles*, as the God of the *Jews*? But if he is their God, then they are his People. And as we know that God is not the Creator of any Beings, but in and by Jesus Christ, by whom every thing was made, that was made; so he is not the God of any People, but in and by Jesus Christ, who is the Reconciler of all things unto God, by whom alone all Things and Persons are made acceptable to him; therefore if he is the God and Father of the *Gentiles*, then the *Gentiles* have an Interest in Jesus Christ, have all their Access to God as their Father and Creator, in and by the Benefits and Merits of Jesus Christ, or, in other Words, are actual Partakers of the Benefits of Jesus Christ, as he is the Saviour of Mankind.

But you will perhaps further ask, How can the *Gentiles* have an Interest in the Benefits of Jesus Christ, since they know him not, nor ask any Thing in his Name?

May you not as well ask me, How they can be said *to live, and move, and have their Being*

Being in God, who know not what it is to have *Life*, and *Motion*, and *Being* in him, nor ever confels'd it in a true Manner, or under a right Sense of it? For if they can have the Benefit of a Life in God, and be blessed by it, who are either totally or much ignorant of it; then Christ, as he is the Attonement and Life of *Adam* and his Posterity, may be a Benefit and Blessing to those who are totally ignorant of it, or at least know nothing of him, as he is Christ, or the Son of God manifest in the Flesh.

Again, the Scripture says of Jesus Christ, that he came *unto his own*, and *his own received him not*, that is, *they knew him not*: Now if he could come unto his own, tho' they knew him not, then it is plain, that they may be *his*, who know him not, that is, they may have some Interest in him, be purchased by him, have received much from him, be greatly related to him, who yet are insensible of it.

Lastly, You might much better ask me, How can they who never knew any Thing of Christ, as their *Mediator* and *Attonement*, be judged by him at the last Day? For if they were altogether Strangers to Christ, had no relation to him, had receiv'd nothing from him, or by Means of him, he could not be their *Judge*. For Jesus Christ cannot do any Thing as a *Judge*, till he has done every Thing

Thing as a *Saviour*; nor be any where a Judge, but where he has first appeared as a Saviour.

Therefore, it is an evident Truth, that had not *all* Nations, and every *individual* Man received a *certain* Means of Salvation through him, he could not be the *Judge* of *all*.

Heathens, Jews and Christians differ not thus, that the one have a *Saviour* and are in a *redeemed* State, and the other are not; or that the one have *one* Saviour, and the other have *another*; for the *one Judge* of all, is the one Saviour of all; but they only differ in this, that one and the same Saviour is *differently made known to them*, and differently to be *obtained by them*. The Heathens knew him not as he was in the numerous *Types* of the *Jewish* Law, they knew him not as he is gloriously *manifested* in the Gospel, but they knew him as he was the *God* of their *Hearts*, manifesting himself by a *Light* of the Mind, by *Instincts* of Goodness, by a *Sensibility* of Guilt, by *Awakenings* and *Warnings* of Conscience; and this was their *Gospel*, which they receiv'd as truly and really in and by and through *Jesus Christ*, as the Law and Gospel were receiv'd through him.

Therefore it is a great and glorious Truth, enough to turn every Voice into a Trumpet, and make Heaven and Earth ring with Praises and Hallelujahs to God, that Jesus
Christ

Christ is the Saviour of all the World, and of every Man of every Nation, Kindred, and Language. Therefore saith St. John, *They sung a new Song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation.** And again, *After this I beheld, says he, and lo, a great Multitude, which no Man could number, of all Nations and Kindreds, and People, and Tongues, stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white Robes, and with Palms in their Hands, and cried with a loud Voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb.†*

I must, before I proceed further, put in here a Word of Caution to two Sorts of Readers. If you are in such a State, as I supposed one to be above, touch'd with modern Infidelity, having your *Reason* set upon the *Watch* to guard you against the Gospel, it may here do its Office, and will perhaps tell you, that what I have here said in favour of the *general Light*, or *Seed of Life* that is in all Men, is much the same Thing that you say in Defence of *natural Reason*, or Religion, only with this Difference, that I mention it as coming from Christ, and you consider it as the bare Light of Nature.

Now

* Rev. v. 9.

† Rev. vii. 9. 10.

Now if this were all the Difference, is not this enough to shew you, that my Opinion is the very *denial* of yours; for if I prov'd that what you call'd the natural Light of Men, was wholly deriv'd from the *divine Revelation*, would not that be a sufficient Proof that I deny'd and disprov'd your Religion of natural Reason? And have I not done the same Thing, if I have asserted the Light of Men to be a Light deriv'd from Christ? And how can such an Assertion be made in the least favourable to your Opinion, that such a Light is *natural*?

But to prevent all Misapprehension, I now declare to you, and will shew you in the most explicit manner, that that which I call the Light of Men or the Seed of Life sown into all Men by Jesus Christ, is as wholly different from that which you call *natural Reason*, as Light is different from Darknes; and that they stand in that same State of *Contrariety* to each other, both as to their *Original*, their *Nature*, and *Qualities*, as our Saviour and *Pontius Pilate* did.

I must therefore assure you, that as I fear God, and wish your Salvation, so I can no more say a Word in favour of what is now call'd the Religion of *natural Reason*, than I would recommend to you the antient *Idolatry* of Heathens. And yet at the same Time, I am no more an Enemy to *Reason*, than I am

an Enemy to the Light of the Sun, and as freely wish you all the Benefits of the one, as of the other.

But if you do by *Reason*, as they did by the *Sun*, who thought it to be *divine*, *fell down* before it, and expected *all* from it, then I must speak as plainly to you of the *Inability* of Reason to do you this Good, as I must have spoke of the *Inability* of the Sun to such *Idolaters* of it.

And if I should have told them, that the Sun was no more their God, than the poorest *Worm* upon Earth, and that it could no more make those to be divine, that worshipped it, than a Storm of *Hail* could make those to be divine, that it fell upon, I should have told them a great Truth. So if I say to you, that *Reason*, or the *Faculty* of Reasoning, is no more the Religion of Man, than the Faculty of *doubting* or *erring* is; and that it can no more make those to be divine who place their Trust in it, than a great *Error* can make those to be divine who abide by it; I should tell you a great and useful Truth.

For Reason, or a Faculty of Reasoning upon the moral Habitues and Relations of Things and Persons, or upon the *moral Proportion* of Actions, has no more of the Nature and Power of Religion in it, than so much Reasoning upon the Relations of *Squares* and *Triangles*. And if a Man had this Religion

ligion of *Reason* only when he was dreaming in *Sleep*, it would be the same good Thing to him, as it is to those who make it their Religion, when they are awake.

For the *Good* of Religion, is like the Good of *Food* and *Drink* to an hungry and thrifty Creature; and if instead of giving such a one Bread and Wine, or Water, you should teach him to seek for Relief, by attending to clear Ideas of the Nature of Bread, of different ways of making it, and the Relation it hath to Water; he would be left to die in the Want of Sustenance, just as your *Religion* of Reasoning leaves the Soul to perish in the Want of Religion. And as such a Man would have no more Benefit from such *Reasoning* about the Relation that Bread had no Water, whether it was the Reasoning of a *Dream*, or the Reasoning of a Man *awake*, because either way he was kept under the same Want of that which was to preserve his Life; so whether a Man has your Religion of *Reasoning* only when he is *asleep*, or when he is awake, is the same Thing; because either Way he is kept under the same Want of that which can alone preserve the Life of the Soul. For the *Good* that is in Religion, or the Good that we want to receive by it, is no more within the *reach* of our *Reason*, or to be *communicated* to us by it, than the Good of Food is in the reach of our Reason, or can be communicated to us by it.

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And yet as a Man may have the *Good* of Food much assisted and secured to him, by the right Use of his Reason, though Reason has not the Good of Food in it, so a Man may have the *Good* of Religion much assisted and secur'd to him by the right Use of Reason, though Reason has not the *Good* of Religion in it.

And as a Man ought not to be accused as an Enemy to the true Use of Reasoning about Food, because he declares that Reason is not Food, nor can supply the Place of it; so a Man ought not to be accused as an Enemy to the Use of Reasoning in Religion, because he declares that Reason is not Religion, nor can supply the Place of it.

But to shew you the Bottom of this whole Matter, pray consider with me as follows :

We have no Want of Religion, but *so far* as we want to *better* our State in God, or so far as we are *unpossessed* of God, or *less* possessed of him than we might be. This is the true Ground of Religion, to alter our *State* of Existence in God, and to have *more* of the Divine Nature or Perfections communicated to us. Nothing therefore is our *Good* in Religion, but that which alters our State of Existence in God for the better, and puts us in possession of something of God, or makes us Partakers of the Divine Nature in such a Manner and Degree as we wanted it.

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Every Thing that is in Life, has its Degree of Life in and from God, it *lives*, and *moves*, and *has its being in God*. This is as true of Devils themselves, as of the highest and most perfect Angels. Therefore all the Happiness or Misery of all Creatures consists only in this, as they are *more* or *less* possessed of God, or as they *differently* partake of the divine Nature, or according to their different State of Existence in God.

But if this be the Truth of the Matter, (and who can deny it) then we have the Certainty of Demonstration, that nothing can be our *Good* in Religion, but that which *communicates* to us something of God or the divine Nature, or that which *better*s our State and Manner of Existence in God.

For if Devils are what they are, because of their State and Manner of Existence in God; if blessed Angels are what they are, because of their State and Manner of Existence in God; then it undeniably follows, that all that is betwixt Angels and Devils, all Beings, from the Happiness of the one to the Misery of the other, must and can have no other Happiness or Misery, but according to their *State* and *Manner* of Existence in God, or according as they have more or less of the State of Angels, or the State of Devils in them. Therefore nothing can be our *Good* in Religion, but that which alters our State

and Manner of Existence in God, and renders us possess'd of him in a different and better Manner.

Now if you was to send to the fallen Spirits of Darkness, all the *Systems* of your Religion of *Reason*, that have been published here, to let them know that they have the Power of their own Restoration and Happiness within themselves, that they need seek to nothing, but their own *natural Reason* and Understanding, and the *Strength* and *Activity* of their own Powers, to raise them to all the Happiness they are capable of; such a Religion would be so far from altering or mending their State of Existence in God, or doing them any Good, that it would add Strength to all their Chains; and the more firmly they believed and relied upon it, the more would they be confirm'd and fix'd in their Separation from God.

And yet, a Religion that must necessarily keep them in Hell, is the only Religion that you will have to carry you to Heaven. May God deliver you from this Error!

On the other Hand, if you could infuse into those dark Sprits a Glimpse of that *Light* of the Mind, or *Instinct* of Goodness, which I have said all Mankind have received from Jesus Christ, as their second *Adam*, their Salvation would be so far begun, and Hell would become a State of *Trial* for their Redemption.

demption. Therefore that Light of the Mind, or Instinct of Goodness which I have spoken of, has the utmost Contrariety to your Religion of *Reason*, that can possibly be imagined.

The one is the Beginning of the new Birth in Christ, and the Foundation of Heaven; the other is the Growth of Death, and the very Essence of Hell in the Soul. Now that here is no Aggravation of the Matter, but the plain and naked Truth, you may easily see from a Consideration of the Articles of your Religion of *Reason*. Your Religion of Reason, is a Religion of *natural Strength* and *Power*, that rejects the *Necessity* of a Saviour, that feels no *Want* of him, that rejects the *Necessity* of *Divine Grace*, the *Guidance* of the Holy Spirit, and feels no *Want* of it; these are the *essential Parts* of your Religion of Reason, which are in Truth and Reality the Religion of Hell, or that *very State* of Mind which reigns and governs there.

For could those miserable Spirits renounce these Articles of your Religion, their Chains of Darkness would break off from them. Could they cast themselves down before God, humbly confessing, that of themselves they are not able to save themselves, or even to think a good Thought: Could they in Humility and Penitence beg of the Mercy of God, to do something *in* them and *for* them,
which

which they cannot do to themselves: Could they acknowledge the *Want* of a Saviour, ask God to *find* one for them: Could they *feel* and *own* the Want of his *Holy Spirit*, and humbly beg of God to be assisted by it, a Door of Salvation would be opened to them, And yet you see that nothing opens this Door, but the plain and full Renunciation of every Part of your Religion of Reason.

And if it be asked, Why they cannot be saved? no other Reason can be given, but because they *will* not; they *cannot* renounce your *Religion of Reason*, that is, they cannot humbly acknowledge their own *Inability* to do themselves good; they will not admit the Thought of a *Saviour*, they will not be *assisted* by the Spirit of God, or own the *Want* of his Life in them, and therefore they are and must be what they are, Prisoners in Chains of Darknes.

Awake therefore, my dear Friend, and cast away this Religion from you, with more Earnestness than you would cast burning Coals out of your Bosom: For could it only destroy your Body, I should have been less earnest in giving you Notice of it. But as I have the fullest Conviction, that it is the *Death* and *Darkness* of your Soul, and is bringing the *Essence* of Hell secretly and invisibly into it; you must forgive me, if I use all the Expressions and Descriptions I can think

think of, to prevent your giving into it. Had I a superficial Charity for you, or a slight View of the Hurt you are doing to yourself, I should speak to you accordingly; but the Depth and Earnestness of my Desire to do you Good, must have Expressions suitable to it. Study not therefore how to find Fault with me, or to dislike the Words, or Manner of my *Stile*, for it is the *Stile* of Love and Zeal for your Salvation; and if you condemn any thing but Love in it, you condemn something that is not there.

I have shewn you, that the Religion of Reason is the *very State* of hellish Minds, and that they are what they are, because they will *do all* for themselves, place all in their *own Strength*, because they cannot be *humble*, cannot own the *Want* of a Saviour; and I have only appeal'd to this Instance of the *Nature* and *Power* of your Religion of Reason, to shew you in the most undeniable Manner, that it must, and can have no other Effect upon you, than it has upon them; that it must produce the *same Hell* in your Soul, the same Separation from God, and cannot possibly be any more the way of Salvation for you, than it is for them.

What is the Reason that the *Faith* of the Devils, or their Belief of a God, doesthem no good? It is because there is nothing in it but their *own Act*, a mere Product of their own;
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it is because it is an Act of your *Religion* of *Reason*, that will have no Virtue but by its *own Strength*, and of its own Growth. But if they could have so much of the Religion of the Gospel, as to say in the Language of it, *Lord help our Unbelief*, their Faith would be changed, and be beneficial to them, only for this Reason, because they had renounced your Religion of doing good to themselves by their *own natural Powers*.

Hence it sufficiently appears, that your Way of natural Reason, cannot be the Way of Salvation: 1st, Because the *Want* of Salvation is nothing else, but the wanting to have our State, or Manner of Existence in God alter'd for the better, or to have *something* of God communicated to us, which we want and are capable of receiving. But if this is the *Nature* of Salvation, then no Religion can *save* us, can do us our *proper Good*, or supply our proper Want, but that which has Power to *alter* our State of Existence in God, or to *communicate* to us that of God which we want and are capable of. Therefore it follows, that nothing but that same God which created us, which gave us our State and Manner of Existence in him, and communicated to us that which we possess of him; nothing but that same God can *redeem* us, or help us to that State or Manner of Existence

istence in him, which we have lost, or are in want of.

But if God alone can redeem us, and for the same Reason that he alone can *create*; if Creation and Redemption necessarily require the same Power, and must for the same Reason be necessarily appropriated to God, because each of them equally imply the Communication of *something* of God to us; then I suppose it may be granted, that the Religion of Reason, which is for *saving* ourselves by our own *natural Powers*, is the greatest of all Absurdities; as absurd as to suppose, that we can create by our own natural Powers, because Creation and Redemption both of them equally imply a *Communication* of something of the Divine Nature; and therefore he that cannot do the one, cannot do the other.

And if a Man was to ask himself, Why he cannot be the Saviour of other People, as well as of himself? He could say nothing against the one, but what must for the same Reason be said against the other. For if Salvation is a Communication of *something* of God to the Person saved, then it is plain, that a Man can no more do this for himself, than he can do it for another.

There never could have been any Dispute about the *Possibility* of saving ourselves, nor any *Pretence* to save ourselves by our own
natural

natural Faculties, had not Men lost all true Knowledge both of God and themselves. For this Dispute cannot happen, till Men suppose that God is some *outward Being*, that our Relation to him is an *outward Relation*, that Religion is an outward Thing that passes between God and us, like Terms of Behaviour between Man and Man; that Sin hurts and separates us from God, only as a Misdemeanour hurts and separates us from our Prince; that an offended or angry God either gives or refuses Pardon to us, as an angry Prince does to his Subjects; and that what he gives us, or forgives us, is something as distinct and different from himself, as when a Prince sitting upon his Throne gives or forgives something to an Offender, that is an hundred Miles from him.

Now all this is the same total Ignorance of God, of what he is, of the *Relation* we have to him, and the Manner of his being *our Good*, as when the old Idolaters took Men to be Gods. And yet nothing is more plain, than that your Religion of Reason is *wholly* founded upon these gross and false Notions of God. You have not an Argument in its Defence, but what supposes all these Errors just mention'd; that our Relation to God is an *outward Relation*, like that of Subjects to their Prince, and that what we do to, and for God, as our Service to him,

him, is and must be done by our *own Power*, as that which we do to, and for our Prince, must be by our own Power. And here lies the Foundation of all your Religion of Reason and Natural Power, that if it was not *sufficient* to obtain for us all that we want of God, he must be less good than a good earthly Prince, who requires no more of us, than that which we have a *natural* Strength to do, or can do by our own Power.

And yet this Error appears to have all the Grossness of *Idolatry*, as soon as you suppose that God is no *outward separate* Being, but that we are what we are, have what we have, can do that which we can do, because he has brought us to this State of Life, Power, and Existence *in himself*, because he has made us, so far as we are made Partakers or Possessors of his own Nature, and has communicated to us so much of himself; or, in the Words of Scripture, because *in him we live, move, and have our being*, and consequently have no Life, Motion, or Being out of him. For from this State of our Existence in God, it necessarily follows, first, that by the Nature of our Creation we are only put into a Capacity of *receiving* Good: A Creature as such, can be in no other State; it is as impossible for him to enrich himself, or communicate more good to himself, as it was to create himself. *2dly*, That nothing but God himself can do us any
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good. 3^{dly}, That God cannot do us good, but by the Communication of himself in some manner to us.

For hence it evidently follows, that your Religion of Reason, which supposes that we have natural Powers that can put us in possession of that, which we want to be possessed of in God, or that we need no more divine Assistance to recover what we have lost of God, than to obtain a Pardon from a Prince; or that God need communicate no more of himself to us in our Salvation, than a Prince communicates of himself to his pardon'd Subject, has all the *Mistakes, Error, and Ignorance* of God that is in *Idolatry*, when it takes God to be something that he is not; and has all the *false Devotion* that is in *Idolatry*, when it puts the same Trust in, and expects the same Help from its *own Powers* and *Faculties*, which Idolaters did in and from their Idols.

Therefore your Religion of Reason, which you esteem as the modern *Refinement* of an human Mind, and more excellent and *rational* than the Faith and Humility of the Gospel, has all the Dregs of the Heathen *Idolatry* in it, and has changed *nothing* in *Idolatry*, but the Idol; but has the same *Mistakes* of the Nature of God, and of the Manner in which he is *our God*, and *our Good*, as those Idolaters had; and only differs from
them

them in such a Degree of *Philosophy*, as the Religion of worshipping the *Sun* differs from the Religion of worshipping an *Onion*.

And if you expect that divine Assistance from your *Reason*, which one did from the *Sun*, and another from an *Onion*; ye are all equally *Idolaters*, though ye may not be equally *Philosophers*.

For as soon as it is known and confessed that God is all in all, that in him we live, move, and have our Being; that we can have nothing *separately* or *out* of him, but every Thing in him; that we can have no Being, nor any Degree of Being, nor any Degree of Good but in him; and that he can give us nothing but himself, nor any Degree of Salvation, but in such Degree as he communicates something more of himself; as soon as this is known, then it is known with the utmost Evidence, that to put our Trust in the *Sun*, an *Onion*, or our *own Reason*, if not equally absurd, is yet equally *idolatrous*, and equally *prejudicial* to our Salvation.

This, I think, my dear Friend, may sufficiently shew you both the Nature and Danger of your Religion of Reason; and that it can no more supply the Needs and Necessities of your Soul, that an *Idol* can save them that worshipped it; that in this Respect it has the *Insignificancy* of an *Idol*, the *Vanity* of an *Idol*, and the *Sin* of an *Idol*; that it is that
same

same Self-confidence, Self-acquiescence, that same Refusal of a Saviour and all divine Assistance, that keeps lost Spirits the Prisoners of Hell. Could they touch the Spirit of the Gospel, their Freedom would be begun; and because they will not, cannot depart in the *smallest Tittle* from your Religion of natural Strength, their Chains are unmoveable.

For no Soul can be lost, that can truly humble itself before God, and apply to his *Mercy* to be help'd, sav'd and redeem'd in *such* a Manner as it shall please him. Let it be hid, or bury'd, or imprison'd where it will, Hell and Earth, Death and Darkness, and every Thing must give Way to the Soul thus converted to God, that has no Confidence in itself, that sees nothing of its own but Sin, and that desires and calls upon God to save it by *some Miracle* of his own Mercy and Goodness. By this *Sensibility* of the *Want* of a Saviour, and by this *humble Conversion* and Application to God for him, all Chains are broken off, all Wounds are healed, and the Soul must infallibly find, if it thus continues to seek, its Salvation in the unknown Depths and Riches of the divine Mercy.

On the other Hand, no Soul, however refin'd and speculative, however lofty and aspiring in its Imaginations, spiritual in its
Conceptions,

Conceptions, or deep in its Penetration, can possibly be sav'd, that trusts in its own Strength and Ability, and will have no *other Saviour* or Redeemer, but his own *natural Reason* and Faculties.

The whole Universe has not two Truths of greater Certainty than these. And yet if they are Truths, and Truths of the utmost Certainty, then the absolute *Necessity* of the Gospel Salvation, and *utter Impossibility* of being saved by your Religion of *Reason*, has its final Decision.

Further, that *Principle* of Life, or *Light* of the Mind, which I have said that every Man receives from Jesus Christ, as the Beginning of his Salvation, is entirely different from your magnified *Light of Reason*, as that signifies a Faculty of viewing the Relations of the Ideas of Things, and drawing Consequences from them. For that Light I speak of, is *Goodness* itself, a *Seed* or *Degree* of so much of the heavenly Life in the Soul; but this Faculty of *Speculating* and *Reasoning* has nothing of the Nature of Goodness or Religion; it has not so much as the *Shadow* of it, and is in its own Nature as foreign from Religion, when it is speculating upon it, as when it is speculating upon any thing else. Just as our Faculty of Seeing has no more of *Goodness*, or the Nature of an *Angel* in it, when it sees
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the Picture of an *Angel*, than when it sees the Picture of a *Beast*.

And as a blind Man has no more Light in him, when he reasons about Light and Colours, than when he discourses about Weights and Measures; so this Ratiocination, or Reasoning of the Mind, has no more of Religion in it, when it speculates its Ideas of God, Goodness, and Morality, than when it speculates its Ideas of Trees and Houses.

And the Reason is plain, because this Faculty of speculating and arguing, is only the *Activity* of the Mind upon its own Images and Ideas, and is only the *same bare Activity*, whatever the Images be that exercise it; it has nothing of the Nature of the Images that it views, nor gets the Nature of them, because it views them; as it does not become *dark* when it considers the Nature, Causes and Effects of Darkness, nor becomes *Light* when it reasons about it; so neither is it *Religion*, nor gets any thing of the Nature of Religion, when it is wholly taken up in making Descriptions and Definitions of it.

If the *Needle* touch'd with the *Loadstone* was an intelligent Being, it could reason and make Definitions of *itself*, of *Attraction*, and of the *Loadstone*; but it would be easy to see, that the *Attraction* in the Needle, or the Virtue of the Loadstone that was left in it, was something in its *whole Nature* really different

different from this reasoning about it; and that this reasoning and defining had no relation to this Attraction, nor would ever be the more like it, for its reasoning upon it, though it continued ever so long, or improv'd ever so much in its Descriptions of it, but would always be at the same Distance from it, and could have nothing of its Nature in it. But now if this reasoning Faculty in the *Needle* should pretend, that the Needle need not be drawn by an inward Attraction, that it need not be *unfix'd*, or deliver'd from any *outward* Impediments of its turning to the Loadstone, because this reasoning Faculty was its *true* and *proper Attraction*, being full of *Ideas* and *Definitions* of it; you would then have a *plain Example* of your Practice, in taking natural Reason to be true Religion, and to have the Nature and Power of *something* that carries the Soul to God.

For this Instance is a clear Explanation of the whole Matter; for that which I have called the first *Redemption* of Christ in the Soul, a *Seed* of Life, an *Instinct* of Good, a *Stirring* of Conscience, an *Attraction* to God, is that to the Soul, which *Attraction* is to the *Needle* that is touch'd, and is as *different* from your Religion of Reason, as a *reasoning* Faculty in the *Needle* would be different from its *Attraction*, and never could be Attraction, or have the Nature of it.

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If the Needle loses its Attraction, its Communication with the Loadstone is at an End; and though it reasons never so strong about it, it is still at the same Distance from it.

So if the Soul loses its *Instinct* of Goodness, its *Seed* of a Divine Life, its *Attraction* to God, all its Reasonings and Definitions about God and Goodness are of no Use to carry it to God, but it must lie in an absolute State of Separation from him, if its Attraction, its inward Tendency to God, is lost.

And let me tell you, my dear Friend, for so I must call you and think of you, that there is much more in this *Instance* than you imagine. For all its *Magnetism*, all is *Sentiment*, *Instinct* and *Attraction*, and the *Freedom* of the Will has the Government of it. There is nothing in the Universe but Magnetism, and the Impediments of it. For as all Things come from God, and all Things have *something* of God and Goodness in them, so all Things have *magnetical* Effects and *Instincts* both towards God and one another. This is the *Life*, the *Force*, the *Power*, the *Nature* of every Thing, and hence every Thing has all that is really Good or Evil in it; Reason stands only as a Busy-Body, as an Idle Spectator of all this, and has only an *imaginary* Power over it.

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We discover this Magnetism in some Things, where it breaks out sensibly ; but it is every-where, for the *same Reason* that it is any-where, though we are too busy with the Fictions of our own Minds to see it, or too much employ'd in such Things as resist and suppress its Force.

But because this Magnetism is a secret Life, that wants to increase its Strength, before it can sensibly shew its Power ; and because we have an *Activity of Reason* within us, that is soon in Action, and concerns itself with every Thing, and takes all upon it, as if it did all ; because it can *look* at all, and *dispute* about all, therefore it is, that this Magnetism, or Instinct towards God and Goodness, has much Difficulty to shew itself sufficiently, and only stirs now and then within us, or when Sickness, Distress, or some great outward Shock has so dash'd in Pieces all Images of Reason, and stopp'd the *Activity* of our Minds, that this secret Power of the Soul has Liberty to awake in it.

This is that Trumpet of God which will raise and separate the Dead, and then all Impediments being remov'd, every Thing will take its Place, not according to the Images and Ideas it has here play'd with, but according to the inward Tendency and Attraction

traction of its Nature, and Heaven and Hell will each take its own.

And even whilst we are in this Life, this Magnetism is the *Mark* within us, to what Part *we* belong; and that which has its Attraction in us, has the Right to us, and Power over us, though for a while Flesh and Blood, and the Nature of our temporal State, hinders this from being visibly and sensibly known.

Nothing however is more plain, than that our Goodness bears no Proportion to our intellectual Abilities of Reason; every one sees this, and yet no more than this need be seen, to give us the fullest Demonstration, that natural Reason has no Connection with Virtue and Goodness, and therefore surely can have no Connection with our Salvation, or be the proper Cause of it.

Hence we see, that *learned, acute, rational* Philosophers are often *Atheists*; and those that can demonstrate the Foundation of Virtue, and paint every Office of it, are Rakes and Debauchees, and will sell every Appearance of practical Virtue for a Salary of so much a Year; whilst those that seem to have little of intellectual Accomplishments, are Virtuous and Honest, have a Taste and Relish for every practical Virtue.

The natural Love or Affection of Relations, bears no Proportion to our rational Abilities to speak or write of them. A

A Parent that is of too refin'd an Understanding to content himself with the Morals of the Gospel, or its low Way of making Men good, and that wants to be entertain'd with a Virtue of more *Mathematical* Exactness, is often content with the Demonstration, and so remains deficient in the plainest Duties of domestick Affection; when the poor Labourer or Mechanick, that knows not what you mean by a Definition, has all the solid Love and Affection that becomes a good Relation. All this, and much more, which you and every one may think for himself of the same Kind, is a sufficient Proof, that the *Ground* of Goodness in every Man, is something entirely *distinct* from our natural Faculties of Reason and Speculation.

And therefore, when you place the Power of your Salvation in your *intellectual* Light, or the Strength of your *own Reason*, you place it in your *weakest* Part, in the *poorest*, most *trifling* and *insignificant* Thing that belongs to you, and upon that which has the least Effect in human Life.

The only Good that Reason can do to you, is to remove the Impediments of Virtue, and to give Room to that inward *Instinct* or *Attraction* to God, and Goodness, to display itself; that the inmost Spirit of your Mind may receive its Strength and Assistance from the Spirit of God, from which, as the
Needle

Needle from the Loadstone, it has all its *Instinct* of Goodness and *Tendency* towards God.

For this inward *Instinct* of Goodness, or Life of God in the Soul, is all the real and living Goodness that is in you, and is as different and distinct from natural Reason, as the *Light*, and *Heat*, and *Power* and *Virtue* of the Sun, is different from a *Picture* of it upon a Piece of *Canvas*, and has as different Effects upon the Mind.

For this Light of bare Reason, or the reasoning Faculty of the Mind, has no Contrariety to the Vices of the Heart, it neither kills them, nor is kill'd by them. As Pride, Vanity, Hypocrisy, Envy or Malice, don't take away from the Mind its *Geometrical* Skill, so a Man may be most Mathematical in his Demonstrations of the Religion of Reason, when he has extinguish'd every good Sentiment of his Heart, and be the most zealous for its Excellency and Sufficiency, when he has his Passions in the most disorder'd State.

But in that *Light* of the Heart, or *Attraction* to God, which I have said is common to all Mankind in and through Jesus Christ, all is contrary. As it is a Gift and Grace of God, so it is a *real Life*, a living Thing, a *Sentiment* of the Heart, and so far as it grows and increases in us, so far it destroys all that
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is bad and corrupt within us. It has the same Contrariety to all Vices of the Heart, that Light has to Darknes, and must either suppress or be suppress'd by them.

Now when I speak of this Light, or Instinct of the *Heart*, or Attraction to God, I have not only the Authority of Scripture, but every Man's own Experience on my Side; that Distinction between the *Head* and the *Heart*, which every one knows how to make, plainly declares for all that I have said. It shews that the State, and Manner, and Tendency of our Heart, is all that is good within us; and that the Reasonings and Speculations of the Head, are only an empty Shew and Noise that is made in the *Outside* of us.

For that which we mean by the *Heart*, plainly speaks thus much, it is a kind of *Life* and *Motion* within us, which every one knows contains all that is good or bad in us; that we are that which our Hearts are, let us talk, and reason, and dispute what we will about Goodness and Virtue; and that this State of our Heart is as distinct from, and independent of all Speculations of our reasoning Faculties, as it is distinct from, and independent of all the Languages in which a Scholar can reason and speculate upon it. And if a Man should say, that the Excellency and Sufficiency of natural Religion consisted in knowing all the Languages in which Vir-

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tue,

true, Goodness and Religion are express'd by different Sounds and Characters, he would have said as much Truth, and as well grounded, as he who places the Excellency and Sufficiency of natural Religion in the many Arguments and Demonstrations which Reason can raise about it. For all Reasoning and Speculation stand on the *Outside* of the Heart, in the same superficial Manner as all Languages do.

For our Heart is our *Manner* of Existence, or the State in which we feel ourselves to be; it is an inward Life, a vital Sensibility, which contains our Manner of feeling what and how we are; it is the State of our Desires and Tendencies, of inwardly seeing, hearing, tasting, relishing and feeling that which passes within us; it is that to us inwardly with Regard to ourselves, which our Senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, &c. are, with Regard to Things that are without, or external to us.

Now as Reason is a poor, superficial, and insignificant Thing with Respect to our outward Senses, unable to add any Thing to our *bearing* and *seeing*, &c. or to be the true Power and Life of them, by all its Speculations and Reasonings upon them; so it is much more a poor, and superficial, and insignificant Thing with Respect to the inward Sensibility of the Heart, or its seeing, feeling, &c. and much more unable to add to,
or

or amend the State of the Heart, or become the Life and Power of its Motions, by its Arguings about them.

And therefore, to seek for the Religion or Perfection of the Heart in the Power of our Reason, is more groundless and absurd, and against the Nature of Things, than to seek for the Perfection and Strength of our Senses in the Power of our Reason.

Now I appeal to every Man in the World for the Truth of all this; for every Man has the fullest inward Conviction, that his Heart is not his Reason, nor his Reason his Heart, but that the one is as different from the other in its whole Nature, as Pain, and Joy, and Desire, are different from *Definitions* of them; and that as a thousand Definitions of Joy and Desire, will not become that Desire and Joy itself; so a thousand Definitions of Religion will not become Religion itself, but be always in the same State of Distance from it; and that all Reasoning and Speculations upon Religion, are at the same State of Distance from the Nature and Power of Religion, as Speculations upon our Passions are from the Nature and Power of them.

You know, not by Hearsay, Reasoning, or Books, but by an inward Sentiment, that your Reason can be very nicely religious, very strict in its Descriptions of Goodness, at the same Time that the Heart is a mere Libertine,
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sunk into the very Dregs of Corruption: On the other Hand, you know, that when your Reason is debauch'd with Arguments, is contending for Prophaneness, and seems full of Proof that Piety is Superstition, your Heart at the same Time has a Virtue in it, that secretly dissents from all that you say.

Now all this Proof that the State of Reason is not the State of your *Heart*, is the same Proof that Reason is not the *Power* or Strength of our Religion, because *what* our Heart is, that is our Religion; what belongs to our Heart, that belongs to our Religion; which never had nor can have any other Nature, Power, or Perfection, than that which is the Nature, Power, and Perfection of our Heart.

You are forced to know and feel, whether you will or no, that God has a certain *secret Power* within you, which is watching every Opportunity of saying something to you, either of yourself, the Vanity of the World, or the Guilt and Consequences of Sin.

This is that Instinct of Goodness, Attraction of God, or Witness of himself in the Soul of every Man, which without Arguments and Reasonings rises up in the Soul, and would be doing some good to it, if not quenched and resisted by the Noise and Hurry either of Pleasures or Business.

And

And this is every ones *natural Religion*, or Call to God and Goodness, which is faithful to every Man, and is the only Foundation of all the Virtue and Goodness that shall be brought forth in him. And the least *Stirring* of this inward Principle, or Power of Life, is of more Value than all the *Activity* of our Reason, which is only as it were a Painter of dead Images, which leave the Heart in the same State of Death, and Emptiness of all Goodness in which they find it.

Therefore, my dear Friend, know the Place of your Religion, turn inwards, listen to the Voice of Grace, the Instinct of God that speaks and moves within you; and instead of forming dead and lifeless Images, let your Heart pray to God, that all that is Good and Holy in him, may touch, and stir, and revive all that is capable of Goodness and Holiness in you. Your Heart wants nothing but God, and nothing but your Heart can receive him. This is the only Place and Seat of Religion, and of all Communication between God and you.

We are apt to consider *Conscience* only as some working of our Heart, that checks us, and so we are rather afraid, than fond of it. But if we look'd upon it as it really is, so much of *God within* us, revealing himself within us, so much of a heavenly Life, that is striving to raise us from the Dead, we

should love and adhere to it, as our happy Guide to Heaven.

For this Reason, I have call'd this *Spark* of Life, or Instinct of Goodness, our *inward Redeemer*; not only because it is the only Thing within, that helps forward our Salvation, but also because it is the first Beginning of Christ's *Redemption* in the Souls of all Men, by his becoming the Attonement for all.

And as it is the first Step of Christ's Redemption in the Soul, and that which became their *Capacity* of Salvation; so the Progress of their Redemption consists in the Increase and Growth of this first Seed of Life, till the new Man be wholly raised up by it.

Lastly, another real Difference between this *Instinct* of Goodness, or Piety of the *Heart*, and your Religion of Reason, is this, that natural Reason in itself is incapable of Jesus Christ; it cannot comprehend him, it is at Enmity with him, and sets itself up against him. For it feels *no Want* of a Saviour, and therefore is *unwilling* to receive one. Or if it was to admit of a Saviour, it must be only such a one as came to increase the Number of its *Images* and *Ideas*, or to help it to be *more active* and artful in the ranging, dividing and distinguishing them.

And for this Reason it is, that a Book of *Ideas* and *Distinctions* is more valued by some People,

People, than all the Salvation that is offer'd in the Gospel.

But this natural Religion or Instinct of Goodness, of which I have spoken, as God's *free Gift* to all Men in Jesus Christ, has that natural Fitness for the receiving of Christ, as the Eye has for receiving the Light; it wants him, it desires him, it is for him, it knows him, it rejoices in him, as the Eye wants, desires, knows, and rejoices in the Light. And of this natural Religion, or Religion of the Heart, does our Saviour plainly speak, when he saith, *He that is of God beareth God's Word*,—and again, *My Sheep hear my Voice*. Therefore this Instinct of Goodness, or Piety of the Heart, though it is God's Gift to Man before his hearing the outward Word, is yet a certain Preparation for it; and if it be brought forth in us, is a never-failing Fitness to receive it. Therefore he that has this *natural Religion* of the *Heart*, of which I have spoken, has the greatest Fitness to receive the Gospel, he is so of God, that *he beareth God's Word*, such a Sheep of Christ as knoweth his Voice. And therefore the receiving, or not receiving the Gospel, is the greatest of all Demonstrations, whether a Man hath, or hath not that *right Religion* that is antecedent to it.

Natural Religion, when rightly understood, is a real Thing, and of the same Truth as
 reveal'd

reveal'd Religion. But the Mistake lies here, in our taking natural Religion to be the Work or Effect of natural Reason; whereas Reason, or our Faculty of reasoning upon our Ideas, is not a *Part* of natural or reveal'd Religion, but only a bare Spectator of its own Images of natural and reveal'd Religion, just as it is not a Part of our *bearing* and *seeing*; nor can come any nearer to them, than as it is a bare Spectator of its own Images of them.

All Men by Virtue of God's first Pardon to *Adam*, are put into a State of Salvation; and as this State, though it is the free Gift of God, is common to all Men, as Men, or born of *Adam*, so it may in a good Sense be call'd their natural State, and the Religion of this State, their natural Religion.

Now the Question is, What is the natural Religion of this State? It is that which his State and Condition speaks to him. Now his Condition and State in the World plainly speaks thus much to him, that he is a *Sinner*, and yet in a State of *Favour* with God, or in a *Possibility* of being accepted of him. Every Man's Nature teaches him thus much, with the same Certainty that it teaches him, that he is weak and mortal. That he is a *Sinner*, and at the same Time an Object of *Divine Mercy*, are Things that are made known to him, not by Arguments or Speculation, but by his own being what he is.

Therefore

Therefore the whole of natural Religion consists in a Man's following this Voice of Nature, and acting conformably to it; in acknowledging the *Sinfulness* of his State, and in *imploring* and *relying* upon the *divine Mercy* to be deliver'd from it. This is the whole Truth of natural Religion; an humble *penitent Sense* of Sin, and an humble *Faith* and *Trust* in the *Mercy* of God to be deliver'd from it; though it is not known by what Name to call that Deliverance, or what kind of Saviour is wanted to effect it. But he that thus according to the Direction of his natural State lives before God, in *Penitence*, and in *Faith* in his *Mercy*, is sure of having the Benefit of all the Mercy of God, though he does not know the *Method*, or the *Means*, by which the Mercy of God will save him.

So that *true, natural Religion* and reveal'd Religion agree in these two great and essential Points, that Man is in a State of *Sin*, and yet in a State of *Acceptance* with God thro' his *Mercy*; therefore the Piety of the one, is the Piety of the other, *viz.* a *penitent Sense* of Sin, and a humble *Faith* and *Trust* in God to be deliver'd from it by *his Mercy*.

And here you may again see, why this Natural Religion is to be consider'd, not as a Matter of *Reason*, but as an *Instinct* of *Goodness*, or Piety of the *Heart*; because it is nothing else but *so much Goodness*, not in *Idea*,
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but in the very *inward Essence* of the Soul, as distinguishes and preserves it both from Beasts and fallen Spirits.

Had a Man no *Sense* of Shame for his Sins, he would be in the very State of the *Beasts*; had he no *Faith* and *Hope* in the *Mercy* of God, he would be in the State of the *Devils*.

Therefore that internal *Sentiment* of *Heart*, that *Instinct* of Goodness, is his *only true* Religion of Nature, because it is thus the *Preservation* of his Nature, and the *saving* him from being like to Beasts and fallen Spirits.

Reason therefore, as it is a Faculty of speculating and comparing Ideas, has no more Share in this Religion of Nature, than it has a Share in our natural Powers of *hearing* and *seeing*; and as it can only in a *little Way*, and in certain *Circumstances*, do some outward Service to these *Senses*, so it can only in the same little and low Way, help and assist this Religion of Nature by some *outward Services*.

And as this Instinct of Goodness, or inward Sentiment of the Heart, is that alone which *preserves* our Nature, and therefore is alone the *true Religion*, or *Salvation* of Nature; so the whole of all reveal'd Religion, is to *improve* this true Religion of Nature in its *two essential Parts*, Penitence for Sin, and Faith and Trust in the Mercy of God. For
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all reveal'd Religion has only this End, it teaches nothing, intends nothing, but to give us more Reasons for *Penitence*, and more Reasons for *Faith* and *Trust* in the Mercy of God.

And therefore it was that I said, this Instinct of Good, or true Religion of Nature, is the *very Preparation* of the Heart for the Reception of the Gospel. For so much as there is of this *Penitence* and *Faith* living in the Soul, so much it has of Eyes to see, of Ears to hear, and of a Heart to understand all the Truths of Divine Revelation. The Humility and Penitence of the Gospel, the Mercies of God in and through Jesus Christ, are as agreeable to a Man in this State of Heart, as Food and Water to the hungry and thirsty Soul. The Gospel presents every Thing to him that he wants; and God is thereby become all that to him, which the miserable State of his Soul stood in need of. And so when he finds the Gospel, he finds the Pearl, for which he gladly sells all that he hath.

Therefore a Man can have no greater Proof that the Religion of *Nature* is suppressed in him, that he has not the Religion of *Penitence* and *Faith*, than by his Refusal of the Gospel; for the Gospel as naturally agrees with such a State of Heart, as Light
mixes

mixes with Light, and Darknefs with Darknefs.

Lay the Cause of Infidelity where you will, it is a certain Truth, that it lies only in this *Insensibility* of Heart, in this *Extinction* of the Religion of Nature. And if the least *Sentiment* of Penitence arises in your Heart, or a *Sensibility* of the Need of *Divine Mercy*, the Gospel has got so far an Entrance into you, that it cannot lose its Hold of you, but by your losing this State of Heart.

Let your Reason pretend what it will, and fancy it as ever so many Objections of *Speculation* and *Argument* against the Gospel, they are all Objections of the Heart. For the Gospel speaks only to the Heart, and nothing but the Heart can either receive or reject it. For this is an eternal Truth, which you cannot too much reflect upon, that *Reason* always *follows* the State of the Heart, and what your Heart is, that is your Reason. If your Heart is full of Sentiments of *Penitence*, and of *Faith* in the divine Mercy, your Reason will take Part with your Heart, and will entertain itself with all Arguments, Ideas, and Discourses, that can *exercise* this Religion of the Heart.

But if your Heart is shut up in Death and Driness, your Reason will be according to it, a *poor Quibbler* in Words, and dead Images, and will delight in nothing but such
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dry Objections and Speculations as answer to the Deadness and Insensibility of your Heart.

So that what you imagine, of your having a Religion of *pure Reason*, is the meerest Fiction of Deceit that can be imposed upon you; for Reason has nothing of *its own*, it acts nothing of *itself*, it barely *reflects* that which comes from the *Heart*, as the *Moon* barely reflects that which comes from the *Sun*; it is the *Servant* of the Heart, and must act or not act in Obedience to it; what the Heart *loves*, that Reason contends for; and what the Heart has no Inclination to, that Reason objects against. Therefore there neither is, nor was, nor ever can be any other Religion but the Religion of the Heart, and Reason is only its Servant, in the same Manner, and in the same Degree, whatever the Religion of the Heart be, whether true or false.

And to imagine that Natural Religion is the Effect of pure Reason and Speculation, is as great an Error against the Nature of Things, and more hurtful to you, than to imagine that *natural bearing* and *seeing* is the Effect of Reason and Speculation.

Natural Religion, if you understand it rightly, is a most excellent Thing, it is a *right Sentiment* of Heart, it is so much Goodness in the Heart, it is its Sensibility both of its Separation from, and its Relation to God;

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and therefore it shews itself in nothing but in a *penitential Sentiment* of the Weight of its Sins, and in an humble Recourse by *Faith* to the *Mercy* of God.

Call but this the Religion of *Nature*, and then the more you esteem it, the better; for you cannot wish well to it, without bringing it to the Gospel State of Perfection.

For the Religion of the Gospel is this Religion of *Penitence*, and *Faith* in the *Mercy* of God, brought forth into its full Perfection. For the Gospel calls you to nothing, but to know, and understand, and practise a full and real *Penitence*, and to know by *Faith*, such Heights and Depths of the divine *Mercy* towards you, as the Religion of *Nature* had only some little uncertain Glimmerings of. Therefore there is the same Agreement, and the same Difference between the *true* Religion of *Nature*, and the Religion of the Gospel, that there is between the *Breaking* of the Day, and the Rising of the Sun to its *meridian* Height; the one is the *Beginning*, and the other is the *Perfection* of the same Thing. And as the Light of the *Day-break*, and the Light of the *Noon-Day*, are both the same Light, and from the same Producer of Light; so the Light of the Religion of *Nature*, and the Light of the Gospel, are the same Light, and from the same Producer of Light in the Mind.

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If you only stood for some Time, in the first *Break* of Day, sensible of the Misery of Darkneſs, and only feeling ſome Hope and Expectation of the Light, yet knowing nothing of that *Globe of Fire* that afterwards was to appear, and bleſs you with ſo many unknown and unhop'd for Joys and Comforts of the Noon-Day Light, you would then reſemble one ſtanding for ſome Time in the Day-break of Natural Religion, ſenſible of the *Weight* of his Sins, and only *hoping* in God for *ſome Kind* of Mercy towards him; yet knowing nothing of that *Globe of Fire*, that *Mystery* of *divine Love* that was by degrees to diſcover itſelf, and bleſs him with ſo many unknown, unhop'd for Joys and Comforts of the divine Mercy towards him.

The original Inſtinct of Goodneſs in the Soul, which I have ſhewn to be the only Religion of Nature, is the Light of *Day-break* in the Soul, and is that Light which *lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*. The Light of the Goſpel is that *Noon-Day* Light, which diſcovers ſuch Joys and Comforts as no one could have thought of, that had only ſtood in the *Break* of Day.

And as no one, when the Day ariſes, can reject or diſpute the Coming or Goodneſs of the Riſing *Sun*, but becauſe he has *loſt* that Senſe which was to *distinguish* Light from Darkneſs; ſo no one can reject or diſlike, or diſpute

dispute against the Light of the Gospel, but he that has *extinguish'd* that *Instinct* of Goodness in the Soul, which *alone* can distinguish Good from Evil, and make him love the one and reject the other.

Don't therefore, my dear Friend, deceive yourself, nor let any one else deceive you. The Matter is of infinite Consequence that you have before you. You come into the World but once, and have but one Trial, but the Effects of it are to last for ever.—The Time of disputing and speculating upon Ideas, is short; it can last no longer than whilst the *Sun* of this World can refresh your Flesh and Blood, and so keep the Soul from knowing its own Depth, or what has been Growing in it. But when this is over, then you must know and feel what it is to have a Nature as *deep*, and *strong*, and *large* as Eternity.

If you have liv'd upon the Amusements of *Reason* and Speculation, your Life has been worse than a *Dream*, and your Soul will at the End of such a Life, be left to itself in its own *Darkness*, *Hunger*, *Thirst*, and *Anxiety*, to be for ever devour'd by its *own Fire*.

But if you have watch'd over that *Instinct* of *Goodness* which God planted in your Soul, and have exercised yourself in that *Penitence* for your Sins, and humble *Faith* in the *Mercy*
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of God, that the Gospel proposes to you; then when your Body falls off from you, you will feel and know that a Kingdom of God lay hid in your Soul, you will see that you have a *Life* and *Strength* like that of Eternity, and the Fulness of God himself will be your everlasting Enjoyment.

For Heaven and Hell stand ready to awake and be reveal'd in you, and can no longer be hid from you, than whilst you are under the Cover of Flesh and Blood. And then will be fully verified in you that Saying of Scripture, *he that seeketh findeth*: For you will find that which you have sought, and according to your Faith, so will it eternally be done unto you. Your Soul will have nothing taken from it, but it will have all *that Good* which you sought after, and provided for it. You chose to be *saved* only by the Powers of your *own Reason*, and refused the *Mercy* of God that was to have saved you, and therefore you will have that *very Salvation* you have chosen, you will be entirely *without* the *Mercy* of God, and left wholly to your *own Nature*: And that Salvation is the Misery of Hell.

You are now your own *Carver*, and must be *that* which you shall have made of yourself. If the Depth of your Heart has not in this Life's Time its proper Cure, if it has not something done to it, which your *Reason*

can no more do, than it can create the Light, your Heart will become your Hell. And if you let the Light of the Gospel shine into it, and revive the *good Seed* of Life in it, then it will become the Seat and Habitation of your Heaven.

You may perhaps imagine, that because you practise Sobriety and Justice, and are a Friend to moral Behaviour, both in yourself and other People, that therefore your *Disbelief* of the Gospel cannot proceed from the *Disorder* of your Heart, or a *Want* of Piety.

But this, Sir, is all mistake. For you may have all this moral Behaviour, and yet have *nothing* at all of that *Sentiment* of *Penitence*, and *Faith* in the divine *Mercy*, which I have shewn to be the *only true* Religion of Nature.

It is as easy to have all this kind of Goodness which you appeal to, as it is to be *civil*, *well-bred*, and a Friend to the *Peace* and *Order* of that Society of which one is a Member.

Even an *Atheist* may find his Ends, and act suitably to his own Principles of Self-love, Ease and Reputation, by this moral Behaviour.

But the Preaching of the Gospel discovers all, and shews from what Principle all this Morality proceeds. If there was this *Sentiment*

Sentiment of Penitence and Faith in the Mercy of God at the Bottom, then this Morality would want and rejoice at the Precepts and Doctrines of the Gospel, because they raise a Morality upon the Foundation of *Penitence and Faith*. But when this Morality is only a *worldly* Wisdom, a *Convenience* of Life, a *political* Conformity, and as meer a *Gratification* of *Selfishness*, as any other worldly Accomplishments are, then this Morality is in the greatest Enmity with the Gospel, because the Gospel takes away its Worth, and all the Self-accomplishment that was placed in it.

Therefore it is not the mere moral Man that has that *Goodness* of the Heart, that is a Qualification to receive the Gospel: For an *Atheist* may be such a *Moral* Man; but it is he, whose Heart is in a *State* of *Penitence* for his Sins, and *humbly* looking to the *Mercy* of God to be *some way* or other deliver'd from them.

This is the *only* Foundation of a religious Morality, and this is that *State* of *Heart* which must be wanting in *every* Moralist that *refuses* the Gospel.

Hence therefore it is plain, that you may have a great deal of Morality in your Behaviour, and yet nothing of the *Religion* of *Nature* in your Heart, and so be entirely unqualified to receive the Gospel, because of
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the *Disorder* of your Heart. For the Morality of an *unreformed* Heart, adds no more Goodness to it, than *whited Sepulchres* do to the *Rottenness* of dead Men's Bones.

What I say, I say not to reproach you, but from a sincere Desire of doing you all the Good that I can. For I have too much Experience myself of the Weakness and Mistakes of human Nature, to reproach any Degree of them in other People. But if you will take in good Part what is well meant, I hope you will find that I have been your Friend in discovering the Bottom of your Disorder.

But it may be you will say, you would believe the Gospel if you could, but that its Evidence cannot have that Effect upon your Mind. You may say also, the Gospel is a Matter of Fact; you must examine into the Truth of it as you do into the Truth of other Matters of History; and as both the internal and external Evidence of the Gospel is much defended and opposed by Learned Men, its Evidence is so perplexed, and made a Matter of such laborious and intricate Enquiry, that your Mind cannot come at any Certainty of what you ought to believe concerning the Truth of it.

I will therefore propose to you the *shortest*, and at the same Time the *surest* of all Methods, and such as you shall either be obliged to

to acquiesce in as sufficient, or to own that you have suppress'd that *Instinct* of Goodness within you, which I have shewn to be the Original Birth-right of all Mankind, and to be the *only* State of Heart that *saves* us from being a mere Mixture of the Beasts and the Devils.

I don't recommend to you to lay aside Prejudice, and begin again the Controversy from the Bottom, and read all on both Sides with all the Impartiality that you can.

I would as soon send you on a *Pilgrimage*, to be a *Penitent*, as propose to you this Travel to be a Christian. The Truth of the Gospel lies much nearer to us than we imagine, and we only dispute and wrangle ourselves into a Distance from it.

Do you think that you need many Books to shew you that you are a *Sinner*, that you have the Disorder of almost all the *Beasts* within you, that you have besides this, such Passions and Tempers of Pride, Envy, Selfishness and Malice, as would make you shun the Sight of other People, if they could see all that passes within you? Need any Learning instruct you, that at the same Time that you have all these Disorders, both of the Beasts, and evil Spirits within you, you have a great Desire to seem to be without them, and are affecting continually to have, and appear in those very Virtues which you feel
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the Want of? When you are full of Hatred and Envy, you affect to be thought good and good-natur'd, when proud, to appear as humble.

Now I desire you to know no Books, but *this Book* of your own Heart, nor to be well read in any Controversy but in that which passes *within you*, in order to know the Gospel to be the greatest of all Truth, and the infallible Voice of God speaking the Way of Salvation to you. No *Eccbo* answers to the Voice that raises it, so certainly and agreeably, as the Voice of Nature, or the State of your own Heart answers to that which the Gospel preaches unto you. And this I will shew you to be the shortest and surest of all Methods to discover the Truth of the Gospel.

The Gospel is built on these *two Pillars*, *First*, That you are a *fallen*: *Secondly*, That you are a *redeemed* Creature. Now every Man's own Soul, and what daily passes within him, speaks these two great Truths to him, with a Conviction and *Sensibility* that cannot be avoided.

You have seen, and you feel, and know that you are a Sinner, that you have the Disorders of the Beasts, and the Depravity of evil Spirits within you. Is not this saying to you, not in the Sound of Words, but by the *Frame* and Voice of your Nature, that
you

you are a *fallen* Creature, and not in that State in which a good Being must have created you? For I appeal to yourself, in your own Degree of Goodness, if you could create your own Children, whether you would not create them in a better State, and with less Evil, both of the Beast and the Devil in them, than that in which you was born yourself?

Therefore, only supposing God to have your Degree of Goodness, he could not have created the first Man, from whom your Nature is deriv'd, in the State that you are; and therefore supposing him only to be good, you have a sufficient Proof; but supposing him to be infinitely good, or Goodness itself, you have an infallible Demonstration written in the Frame of your Nature, that you are a *fallen* Creature, or not in that State in which God created you.

Again, do you want any Learning, or Books, or Reasoning, to shew you, that every Man, as well as yourself, affects to appear virtuous, to have good Qualities, and is ashamed of every beastly and diabolical Disorder; and would seem to have Virtues and Goodness that he has not, because of an innate Love that he has for them, and from a Sense of their being proper for him? And is not this saying again with the same Fulness of Certainty, that you are a *redeem'd* Creature,

ture, that there is in you an *inward* Redeemer, a *Light* of the Mind, a *Seed* of Goodness, an *Instinct* to Virtue, given you by God, though without Revelation you don't know *when* nor *how*?

And is not this such an Evidence of the *Truth* of the Christian Religion, and of its *Fitness* to *save* your Soul, as not only needs not the Assistance of foreign Books, and Learning, but is also sufficient to support itself against all the Books and Learning in the World that should oppose it? Can any Eccho answer better to the Voice that raises it, than the Voice of your Nature answers to the Sound of the Gospel? And do you not hereby plainly see, that you stand nearer to the Truth of the Christian Religion, than you do to any Thing else? It is only the Description of that which passes within you. It is the Book of yourself, it talks of nothing *out* of you, it speaks but that which is written *within* you, and therefore you have a sufficient Help to understand it. To look for *outward* Testimonies, is like looking for yourself *abroad*; turn but your Eyes inward, and you have no need of Miracles to shew you, that Jesus Christ came from that God that made you, and that he teaches you the only Way to find that Perfection and Happiness for which he made you.

What

What can the Gospel say to you of the Fall of Man, that your Heart does not feel to be true? What can it say to you of your Redemption, that is not at the same Time said to you by the State of your own Soul?

For if you was not fallen, how could you labour under so much Corruption? A sinful Creature cannot come from God in its sinful State. And on the other hand, if you was not redeem'd, how could you feel a Dislike of Sin, an Inclination to Goodness, and a Desire of appearing virtuous? For what else is this Desire of Goodness, but a certain *inward Principle* that has begun your *Redemption*, and is trying to carry it on?

Now the Christian Religion says nothing to you, it has not one Doctrine, or Practice, or Institution, but what has its immediate Relation to these two great Truths, and is for the Sake of them, either to convince you of your Fall, or to assist your Redemption.

Now if a Revelation from God had only told you, that you had a Mixture of *Evil* and *Good* in you, could you have any Doubt about the Truth of such a Revelation? Or if it told you that the *Evil* came from the Fault of your first Parents, and the *Good* was God's free Gift to you at their Fall, that the *Evil* might be resisted and suppress'd; if it told you, that God had a Desire, and a Design in the Depths of his Mercy, to assist

the *Good* that was in you, that it might conquer and put an entire End to all the Evil of your Nature, would you ask for Proofs of the Goodness of such a Revelation, or of its being worthy of God, and suitable to your own Needs?

Now the Christian Religion is this Revelation. It tells you only this great Truth, that you are *fallen* and *redeemed*, that is, that you have a Mixture of *Evil* and *Good* in you; it tells you that God, as early as the *Fall*, redeemed you, when the *Seed* of the Woman became the Enemy of the *Serpent*; that is, as soon as the Evil came into you, he of his *free Gift* put a good *Power* into you to withstand it; it tells you, that from the Beginning of the World, it has been God's gracious Desire and Design in and by Jesus Christ to render your Redemption effectual, that is, to make the *Good* that is in you perfectly overcome all your *Evil*.

Complain therefore no more of Want of Evidence; neither *Books*, nor *Study*, nor *Learning* is wanted; the Gospel is *within* you, and you are its *Evidence*, it is preach'd unto you in your own Bosom, and every Thing within you is a *Proof* of the Truth of it.

Ask how you shall know there is such a Thing as Day and Night; for the Fall and Redemption are as manifest *within* you, as Day and Night are manifest *without* you.

Here,

Here, Sir, in this intimate and true Knowledge of yourself lies the most precious Evidence of the Gospel, and is as near to you, as you are to yourself; because all that is said and declar'd, and recorded in the Gospel, is only a plain Record of that which is said and done, and doing in yourself.

And when you once feel it thus prov'd to you, by its Agreement with the State of your own Nature, then it becomes a Pearl that is dearer to you than your Life, and what is best, it is then a Pearl which no one can rob you of. You are then in such Assurance and Possession of the Power and Goodness of Christ, as those blind Men were, whose Eyes he had opened to see the Light.

Then all the Wrangle and Dispute of Learned Men against the Truth of the Gospel, will signify no more to you, nor raise any more Doubt in you, than if by *History* and *Criticism* they would prove, that you never had any Benefit from the Light of the Sun.

If you go *only* outwardly to work, and seek only for an outward Proof of the Truth of the Gospel, you can only know it by such Labours, and in such Uncertainty as you know other Matters of History, and must be always balancing what is said for, and against it. And if you come to believe it
this.

this Way, your Faith will be held by an uncertain Tenure, you will be alarm'd at every new Attack, and frighted at every new Enemy that pretends to lessen the Evidence of the Gospel.

But these, Sir, are Difficulties that we make to ourselves, by neglecting the proper Evidence of the Gospel, and chusing only to know it, as we know other Histories that have no *Relation* to us, or *Connexion* with our own State.

The Gospel is not a History of something that was done and past 1700 Years ago, or of a Redemption that was then *present*, and only to be transmitted to Posterity as a Matter of *History*; but it is the Declaration of a Redeemer, or a redeeming Power that is always in its *redeeming State*, and equally *present* to every Man.

We all stand as near to the Reasons and Motives for receiving the Gospel, as they did to whom it was first preach'd. No one then did, or could receive Jesus Christ when he was on Earth, but for the same Reasons, that the *Sick*, the *Lame*, and the *Blind*, sought to him to be cur'd, namely, because they felt their *Infirmities*, and wanted to be *reliev'd* from them. But if this State of Heart, or their Sensibility of their Condition, of what they were, and what they wanted, was then the *only possible* Reason they could have for receiving

receiving Christ; then it follows, that every Man of every Age, has all the Reasons for receiving or not receiving the Gospel within himself, and stands just as near to, and just as far from the Evidence of it, as those did who first heard it.

If you know of no Burden or *Weight* of Sin, nor *want* any *Assistance* to overcome it, the Gospel has *no Evidence* for you, and tho' you had stood by our Saviour, you had been never the nearer to it. But if you know your State, as the *Sick*, the *Lame*, and the *Blind*, knew their State, if you groan under the Power of Sin, and are looking towards God for some Assistance to overcome it, then you have *all* the *Reason* for receiving the Gospel written in your Heart, and you stand as *near* all its *proper Evidence*, whether you was born in the last Age, or 1700 Years ago.

Now if you don't *know* and *feel*, that the Gospel has this Foundation in you, that you have that *Fall* and *Redemption* in you that it teaches, then all external Evidence of it can be of no use to you, because you are not the *Person* that wants *such* a Salvation.

But if you know that these two Things are written in the Frame of your Nature, that Evil and Good, or the *Fall* and the *Redemption*, are at Strife within you, and that you want some Divine Assistance to help you to overcome the Evil that is in you; then

the Gospel needs no external Evidence, because your Heart is a Witness of all the Truth of it. For you are then only doing that in a lower Degree, which the Gospel teaches and enables you to do in a more perfect and prevailing Manner.

Further, if you have only that *Instinct* of Goodness in you, which I have shewn to be the *only Religion* of Nature, if you have a Desire to act suitably to this State of your Heart, this Struggle of Evil and Good that is in you, and are weary of your Sins, and desirous to be deliver'd from them, then you are fully prepared to love, admire, and receive all the Precepts of the Gospel, because they have no End, but to that which you want and desire to have done in you; that is, to suppress the Power of Evil in you, to destroy the old Man, or the first Life of your corrupt Nature, and to raise the new Man, or Principle of Goodness that is in you, to its full State of Strength and Perfection.

And here you have the shortest and surest of all Methods, to find both the Truth and Excellency, and Necessity of the Gospel Method of Salvation.

I put no Labour or deep Enquiry upon your Hands: I desire you only to know, what you cannot help knowing, that you have *Good* and *Evil* alive and at work in you.
For

For this is the Whole of the Fall of *Adam*, and of the Redemption of Jesus Christ. Say that you have no Evil in you, and I will not desire you to believe the Fall of *Adam*. Say that you have no Sense of Goodness in you, and I will not desire you to acknowledge the Redemption through Jesus Christ. But if neither of these can be deny'd to be in you, if your own Heart confesses these two Things; How can you want a Proof of the Truth of that Religion, which only tells you that which your own Heart is a Witness of ?

Again, say that you have no *Instinct* of Goodness in you, that you have no *Dislike* of the Corruption of your Nature, nor the *smallest* Desire to be free from it, and then I will excuse your Ignorance of the Truth and Fitness of the Precepts of the Gospel.

But if you will but own *so much* of natural Religion, as to be *at all* troubled at your Sins, or but *secretly wish* that God would *some way* or other help you to get the better of them ; then you are under a Necessity of seeing and knowing that the Precepts of the Gospel are highly suited to the State of your Soul, to assist *this Degree* of natural Religion in you, and to help you to *that Conquest* over Sin which you want.

So that from this plain and easy Knowledge of yourself, you are absolutely obliged either to deny the *most known* State of your Heart,

Heart, and to deny that you have *any Degree*, or *Desire* of Goodness in you; or to own the Gospel to have *every Thing* in it, both as to Doctrine and Precept, that strictly answers to the *State* and *Necessities*, and good Inclinations of your Heart.

And therefore the Proof of the Gospel is at *no Distance* from you, requires no Labour of Learning, or Search of History, but arises from the most obvious Knowledge of yourself, what you are, and what you want. And you may have the utmost Assurance, that you cannot hurt or deceive yourself in this short Method that I have recommended. For if you cannot be hurt or deceiv'd in believing yourself to be a *Sinner*, and yet to be in a State that *admits* of the divine *Mercy* to you, then you are sure that you cannot have any Hurt or Deceit put upon you by the Gospel; because it is to do nothing to you, you are to receive nothing from it, but a *Confirmation* of your *Penitence*, and a *Strengthening* of your *Faith* in the Mercy of God.

Understand all the Gospel in this Manner, and then you understand it according to the Truth, as it is in itself.

For there is not a Doctrine or Precept of the Gospel, but is given you for this End; to perfect your Penitence, to shew you all the Grounds, and Reasons, and Extent of it, and to confirm, increase, and exercise your
Faith

Faith in the Mercy of God, by such a Discovery of God, and his Goodness towards you, as without the Gospel could not have been known.

So then, if you know the Religion of *Nature*, the Religion of *Penitence* and *Faith*, to be a true and good Religion, if the Proof of the Truth and Goodness of this Religion lies *within you*, then the Proof of the Truth and Goodness of the Gospel is in the *same Degree* of Nearness to you, and you cannot but know it in the same Manner and Degree as you know yourself, what you are, and what you want.

Thus much may serve to convince my unbelieving Reader, if I have such a one, whom I would fain lead to God, that I have said nothing in favour of a modern Religion of Reason; which I have shewn to have the *Vanity*, *Insignificancy*, and *Sin* of the antient Idolatry in it, and to be that *very Confidence* in natural Strength, and *Hardness of Heart*, which keeps fallen Angels Prisoners of Darkness.

I must now say a Word to the zealous Christian, who may perhaps imagine from what I have said of that inward Light, which is the *Gift of God* to all Men in Jesus Christ, that I have brought this Light too near to the advantageous State of reveal'd Religion, whether Jewish or Christian.

To

To such a one I say, first, that what I have said of this *Light* of the Mind, or *Instinct* of Goodness common to all Men, is so much said of the *Light* and of the *Benefit* of Divine Revelation. Because this *Light* of the Mind, or *Instinct* of Goodness, is not something *independent* of, and *antecedent* to all divine Revelation, but was the *Effect* of God's revealing himself as *reconcil'd* to *Adam* through the *Seed of the Woman*. God's pardoning *Adam* as the *Head* and *Representative* of all Mankind, and giving him a Mediator and *Redeemer*, was putting him into a State and Capacity of being *renewed* in his Mind; and this *renewing Power*, which God then by pardoning him bestowed upon him, is that *Instinct* of Goodness, or *Light* of the Mind, of which I have spoken.

And therefore all the *Possibility* of Religion, and all that is *good* in it, is to be ascribed to divine Revelation.

Secondly, what I have said of this common *Light*, or *Piety* of the Heart, is only to signify, that they have a *Possibility* of such good Dispositions as belong to those, of whom it is said, *He that is of God, heareth God's Word*; and of such as Christ spoke, when he said, *My Sheep hear my Voice*.

Now if there were not a *Possibility* or *Capacity* of this Degree of Goodness in Men, distinct from all outward Revelation, How
could

could Mankind be fit for God to make a Revelation to? For if Men could not be in *this State* of Goodness, so as to be *prepared* or *qualify'd* Hearers of the Word of God, why should God speak to them? Or why should the Voice of Christ be sounded, if there were *no Sheep* that could know it? Therefore what I have said of this Light of Men, is only so much said of their *Capacity* to receive divine Revelation; it is only a *Glimmering* of Light, a *Seed* of Goodness, a *Possibility* of Piety, which lies only in the Soul, as the *Beginning* of its Salvation, and therefore is in great Want of, and must be much benefited by further Revelations from God.

I have not consider'd it as a *Species* of Religion that may *trust* in *itself*, or set up in *itself* against divine Revelation, as having no Need of it. When it is thus, it is not the Religion that I speak of, it is so far from being then the *Light* of Christ in the Soul, or the *Instinct* of Goodness that it had from him, that it is the *Darkness* and *Depravity* of the Heart, and the *Foundation* of that Hell which will be at last manifested in it.

Lastly, if my zealous Christian should find it a disagreeable Thought to him, to think that *all Mankind* have had some *Benefit* from Christ, and that the *Seed of the Woman* from the Beginning, has help'd, and will to the

the End of the World help and call *every Man* to resist and make War against the Serpent ; I must tell him, he need have no greater Proof than this, that his own Heart is not yet truly Christian, that he is not a true Disciple of that Lord who *would have all Men to be saved.*

Having said thus much to guard against all Misapprehension, either by the Unbeliever, or the Christian, I now return to my Subject, concerning the Benefits of Christ, as he is the Saviour of Mankind.

Now this great Truth that I have already declar'd, namely, that all Mankind were pardoned and redeemed in *Adam's* Pardon and Redemption ; that at the Fall, Jesus Christ became the *second Adam*, or Parent of all Mankind, who from him received a Principle or Seed of Life, and Instinct of Goodness, which was to be in every Man a *Beginning* of a new Birth, a *Possibility* of his Salvation, or receiving a new Man from this second *Adam*, in the same Reality as he received a *natural* Life from the first *Adam*; this great and glorious Truth is of great Importance when rightly known, and is the Key to all the Mysteries of Scripture ; it leads you into the Fulness of the greatest Truths, and disperses all Difficulties.

This *free Gift* of God to all Men, in thus making all Men *Partakers* of Christ's Redemption,

Redemption, by a Seed of Life, which all Men, as Men, receive from Christ, is the true and solid Meaning of that which is call'd *Preventing Grace*, and which, when rightly spoken of, is said to be common to all Men. It is *Grace*, because it is God's *free Gift*, we could not lay hold of it by any Power of our own, nor had any Right to claim it. It is *Preventing Grace*, because it prevents, or goes before, and is not given us for any Thing that we have done. And therefore it has its plain Distinction from God's *assisting Grace*, which always is in *Proportion* to the Nature of our Actions, and only works as they work.

Hence there is a full End of all the wretched Disputes of an abominable *Election* and *Reprobation*, and of other Disputes concerning the Grace of God.

For if all Men, as Sons of *Adam*, are by the *free Gift* of God made Sons of the *second Adam*, and, as such, have a *Principle* or *Seed* of Life in them from him, in order to be raised up to a Perfection of the new Man in Jesus Christ; and if this *Seed* of Life, or *Instinct* of Goodness, or Light of the Mind, is the *General Preventing Grace* of all Men, that enables them so to act as to obtain God's *assisting Grace* in the Renewal of their Minds; then you must easily see, that all Men have a *general Call* and a *general Capacity* to obtain

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their

their Salvation, and that the Doctrine of *particular absolute* Election and Reprobation is pluck'd up by the Roots, and most of the Difficulties of God's Dispensations fairly solv'd. But this by the by.

Now you must have observed that this *general* Grace, or *Redemption*, or *Life* given to all Men in Christ as their *second Adam*, is not done only by an *outward teaching*, when one teaches another the Way of a new Life, or by an *outward Adoption*, as when a Person takes a Stranger to be his Son; but by the *Communication* of an essential *Seed* or *Principle* of Life from the second *Adam* to all the Sons of the first *Adam*.

From which *Seed* or *Principle* of Life, every Son of *Adam* has Christ for his spiritual Father and Parent in the *same Reality*, as he had the first *Adam* for his natural Parent.

For this Reason, the *Change* that Religion aims at, is constantly represented as a *new Birth*, and our Progress in Religion as our Progress in *Regeneration*, or being born again. We are not call'd upon only to change our *Notions*, or to receive such an *Alteration*, as *Scholars* may receive from their *Teachers*, but to die to ourselves, that a new Life may be raised up in us; or to suffer something to be revived in us that is not of our own Growth, or any Change that we can make upon ourselves.

Thus

Thus says our Lord, *Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.**

And to shew that this new Birth is to be understood according to the *literal Truth* of the Expression, there is added, *That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.* Therefore the Birth of the Spirit is as *real* as the Birth of the Flesh, and Christ is a Principle of Life to us, as surely as we derive our Flesh from Adam.

Again, *The first Adam was made a living Soul, the last Adam was made a quickning Spirit.†* That is, the first Adam was made to be a Fountain, or Original, of a *natural Life* to Men, the second Adam was made a Reviver or Parent of a *spiritual Life* in Men. Therefore the spiritual Life deriv'd from the second Adam, is in the same *Degree of Reality*, as the natural Life deriv'd from the first Adam. The Apostle adds, *The first is of the Earth, earthy; the second is the Lord from Heaven. And as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: And as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.*

Therefore those that are related to Christ, have his heavenly *Life and Nature* in them, in the same *Reality* as those that are related to Adam have his earthly Nature in them. *And*

as

* John iii. 5.

† 1 Cor. xv. 45.

as we have bore the Image of the earthy, so we shall also bear the Image of the heavenly.

Therefore, as we bear the Image of the first *Adam*, by having *his Nature and Life* in us, *deriv'd* from him; so we can only bear the Image of the second, by having his *Nature and Life* in us, *deriv'd* from him.

So that it is an undoubted Truth, that Christ is our second *Adam*, or a Raiser of a *new Birth and Life* in us, in the same Reality as we have our natural Birth and Life from *Adam*. Hence it is that you see so much mention in Scripture of Christ's being *in us*, *form'd* in us, *reveal'd* in us, of our *putting* on Christ, of our receiving Life from him, as the Branches from the Vine. Hence also so much mention of a *new* and *old* Man that is in us, and the whole of Religion represented as a Contest betwixt this twofold Man that is in us, the one from the first, the other from the second *Adam*.

The Knowledge of this great Truth, that Christ is our second *Adam* as mention'd above, renders all the most mysterious, and seemingly hard Passages of Scripture, not only plainly intelligible, but full of a most affecting Sense. Thus when it is said, that Christ must be *formed* in us, and that *we are Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones, &c.** All this, and the like, is highly intelligible,

* Eph. v. 30.

intelligible, as soon as it is known, that Christ is the *Parent* of a spiritual *Man* in us, in the same *Reality*, as *Adam* is the Parent of our natural Life.

Thus also when Christ saith, *Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you. And again, I am the Bread of Life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.* And again, Whosoever shall drink the Water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: But the Water that I shall give him, shall be in him a Well of Water springing up into everlasting Life.† And again, I am the Resurrection and the Life.—Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.‖*

Now if Jesus Christ had been only a Teacher of *Morality*, how unaccountable must all this Language have been? But as soon as it is known that he is a spiritual *Parent*, or *Principle* of Life to us, in the same Reality as we derive our Flesh and Blood from *Adam*, and that this *Life* lieth in us as a *Seed*, which is to be brought forth to the Fulness of its Stature by *Faith* in Christ, then all these Passages have a Meaning that is plainly intelligible, yet never to be exhausted, but is always suited to the State and Progress of the Reader.

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For

* John vi. 35.

† John iv. 15.

‖ John xi. 25.

For if Christ is a Principle of Life to us, and this Life is *drawn* into, or *formed* in us by Means of our *Faith*; then how justly are we said to eat Christ as the *Bread of Life*, to *eat his Flesh and drink his Blood*, &c. when by Faith we draw him into us, as our Principle of Life? For what can express the Nature of this *Faith*, so well as *Hunger* and *Thirst*? Or how can it be a *real Faith*, unless it have much of the Nature of *Hunger*, of a strong *Desire*, and ardent *Thirst*?

Therefore all these Expressions are as *literally* suited to the Nature of the Thing, to *that* which Christ is to us, as human Words can be, and are not a Language adapted to our *Reason*, to increase its Ideas; but are the Language of Heaven to the heavenly Part of us, and are *only* to excite, direct, and confirm our *Faith* in Christ, or to raise, increase, and exercise our *Hunger*, *Thirst* and *Desire* of the new Birth of Christ in our Soul.

From this Doctrine of Christ's being a *Principle* of Life, or *Parent* of a new Birth in us, we may see the plain Reason, why the Scripture describes a Christian as a Creature, or Instrument of the Holy Spirit, and entirely animated by it, so far as he is truly Christian. Because as Christianity consists in the Birth of a new Man within us, it must needs have a Spirit and Breath as suitable to it,

it, as the Spirit and Air of this World is suitable to a Life of Flesh and Blood. And as every Thought and Motion of our outward Man must be in, and by the Assistance of the Spirit, and Air of this outward World; so every Thought and Motion, and Desire of our inward spiritual Man, must be in, and by the Assistance of the Spirit, and Air of that World, whose Creature it is.

Now, was there not as really this new spiritual Man within us, in the same reality of Existence, as our outward rational Nature, there could be no Foundation for this Doctrine of the Necessity of God's Holy Spirit. Nor could the Scripture Account of the Guidance of that Holy Spirit be at all intelligible, upon this Supposition, that we had nothing more in us, but our *outward rational Nature*.

Thus when it is said, *No one can call Jesus the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit*: How could this be intelligible, or have any Truth in it, if there were not a Principle in us, a spiritual Man, distinct from our rational Nature? For our rational Nature can as well call Jesus Lord, as it can call any one else Lord, or as *Judas* said, *Hail Master*.

Therefore since Man in his natural State, and by his Powers as a rational Man, cannot truly call Jesus Lord, it follows, that he has a spiritual Nature or Principle in him, entirely

tirely distinct from his rational Nature, and which receiving its Life and Power from the Spirit of God, has alone the *Power* of owning, knowing and receiving Jesus Christ as Lord.

St. Paul saith, *Ye are not in the Flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. Now if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his**. And again, *Now we have received not the Spirit of this World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the Things that are freely given to us of God. Bnt the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; for they are Foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned†*.

Therefore there is a *spiritual Life*, or *Man* within us, by which alone we have our *Communication* with God, and which is so distinct and different from our *natural, rational Man*, that they are of a Nature contrary to each other. The one is by Nature fitted to receive, and know the Things of the Spirit of God, the other has a Nature that cannot know, nor receive them.

This is not to be understood, as if the natural Man could not understand the Words of Scripture, as other Words are to be understood, for he can reason and discourse as well

* Rom. viii. 9.

† 1 Cor. ii. 12.

well upon Scripture, and the Things of the Spirit of God, as upon other Matters.

Neither are we to take him that is able to *discern* Things spiritually, to be only such a one whose Faculty of *Reasoning* is assisted by the Holy Spirit. For this does not make the spiritual Man here spoken of. No, the Subject of the Holy Spirit, or that which it operates upon in us, is not our *reasoning Faculty*, it no more assists our Reason in this Manner, than it assists our Eyes to read a difficult Print, or our Ears to hear Sounds more distinctly.

For as the Holy Spirit is *Holiness* itself, or the *Life* and *Power* of Holiness, so it operates only in the Manner of itself, and only upon that Part of us, which has its own Nature, or a real Agreement with it. Therefore the spiritual Man that is animated, enlighten'd and guided by the Holy Spirit, is that *vital Instinct* of Goodness, that *Spark* of Life, of which I have spoken so much, and which shews itself in an inward *Sentiment* of the *Weight* of Sin, and in an inward *Sentiment* of *Hope* and Conversion to the *Mercy* of God.

This is the Beginning, or Foundation, or Seed of that spiritual Man, for whom the Scriptures are written, to whom they speak, and who alone has a Capacity to hear and receive them, because he alone has a Capacity to be animated, moved, and governed by the Holy Spirit. And

And therefore it is, that our Saviour saith so often, *He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear.* Meaning only this inward State or Sensibility of the Heart. He is so far from saying, according to modern Learning, he that hath *clear Ideas*, that has accustom'd himself to *Reason*, and distinguish about them; he that can speculate impartially, and search into the Nature of Things, Actions and Persons, by comparing the Ideas of them; let such a one so prepared, draw near to the Kingdom of Heaven; he is so far from saying any Thing like this, that he rejects it all as the *Burden* and *Darkness* of the Heart, and says, *Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

But you will perhaps say, if the Scriptures are not proposed to our *Reason*, if Reason is not the *Subject* or *Faculty* of Religion in us; is not this the same as to say, that the Scriptures and Religion are proposed to the *unreasonable* Part of us? Is it not saying, that we must neglect or suppress that which is most excellent in us, in order to be religious?

You shall see Reason possessed of all that belongs to it, and yet Religion set up in a better Place.

I will grant you much more than you imagine in respect of Reason; I will grant it to have as great a Share in the good Things
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of Religion, as it has in the good Things of this Life; that it can assist the Soul, just as it can assist the Body; that it has the same Power and Virtue in the *spiritual* World that it has in the *natural* World; that it can communicate to us as much of the one as of the other, and is of the same Use and Importance in the one as in the other. Can you ask more?

Now Man consider'd as a Member of this World, that is to have his Share in the Good that is in it, is a *sensible* and a *rational* Creature; that is, he has a certain Number of *Senses*, as Seeing, hearing, Tasting, Smelling and Touching, by which he is *sensible* of that which the outward World, in which he is plac'd, can do to him, or communicate to him; he is sensible of what Kind and Degree of Happiness he can have from it; besides these *Organs* of Sense, he has a *Power* or Faculty of *reasoning* upon the Ideas which he has receiv'd by these Senses.

Now how is it, that this World, or the good Things of this World are communicated to Man? How is he put in Possession of them? To what *Part* of him are they proposed? Are his *Senses* or his *Reason* the Means of his having so much as he has, or can have from this World?

Now here you must degrade Reason, just as much as it is degraded by Religion. And

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as we say, that the good Things of Scripture and Religion are not proposed to our Reason; so you must say, that the good Things of this World are not proposed to our Reason. And as St. *Paul* says, the *natural* Man cannot receive the Things of the Spirit of God, because they are *spiritually* discerned; so you must also say, the *rational* Man cannot receive the Things of this World, because they are to be *sensibly* received, that is, by the Organs of Sense.

Thus must you necessarily set Reason as low, with Respect to the Things of this World, as it is set with Respect to the Things of the spiritual World. It is no more the Means of communicating the good Things of the one, than of communicating the good Things of the other.

It stands in the same Incapacity in one World, as in the other.

For every one knows, that we know no more, can receive no more, can possess no more of any Thing that is communicable to us from this World, than what we know, receive and possess by our *Senses*, or that *sensible Capacity* that is in us, of having something communicated to us by the World. *Sounds* are only propos'd to our *Ears*, Light to our *Eyes*; nothing is communicated to our *Reason*; no Part of the World hath any Communication with it. Reason therefore
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has no *higher* Office or Power in the Things of this World, than in the Things of Religion. The World is only so far known, received and possess'd, as we receive and possess it by our Senses. And Reason stands by, as an impotent Spectator, only beholding and speculating upon its *own Ideas* and *Notions* of what has pass'd between the World and the *sensible* Part of the Soul.

And as this is the State of Man in this World, where he receives all the Good he can receive from it, by a *Sensibility* of his Nature, entirely distinct from his Faculty of reasoning; so is it his State with regard to the spiritual World, where he stands only capable of receiving the invisible good Things of it, by a *Sensibility* of his Nature, or such a Capacity as *lets* the spiritual World into him, in the Manner as the natural is let into him in this Life. Religion therefore does no more Violence to your Reason, or rejects it in any *other way*, than as all the good Things of this Life reject it. It is not *Seeing*, it is not *Hearing*, it is not *Tasting* and Feeling the Things of this Life, it can supply the Place of no one of these Senses. Now it is only thus *helpless* and *useless* in Religion; it is neither Seeing, nor Hearing, Tasting nor Feeling of spiritual Things; therefore in the Things of Religion, and in the Things

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of this World, it has *one* and the *same* Insignificancy. So that the Things of the Spirit of God belong not to Reason, cannot be known and receiv'd by it, for the same Reason, that the good Things of this World belong not to Reason, and cannot be known and receiv'd by it.

It is the *Sensibility* of the Soul that must receive what this World can communicate to it; it is the *Sensibility* of the Soul that must receive what God can communicate to it. Reason may follow after in either Case, and view through its own Glafs what is done, but it can do no more.

Now the *Sensibility* of the Soul, which is its Capacity for Divine Communications, or for the Operation of God's Holy Spirit upon it, consists in an *inward Sentiment* of the *Weight* and Disorder of Sin, and in an *inward Sentiment* of *Hope* and *Conversion* to the Mercy of God. This is the first *Seed* of Life, sown into the Soul when *Adam* was redeemed; and it is this *Seed* of Life, or *Sensibility*, that the Holy Spirit of God acts upon, moves and quickens, and enlightens; and to this it is, that all that is said in the Scripture is address'd. Nothing but this *Sensibility*, or State of Heart, has Eyes to see, or Ears to hear the *Things* of the Spirit of God.

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Reason may be here of the same Service to us, as it may be when we want any of the Enjoyments of this Life. It may take away a *Cover* from our Eyes, or open our Window-Shutters, when we want the Light, but it can do no more towards seeing, than to make Way for the Light to act upon our Eyes. This is all its *Office* and *Ability* in the good Things of Religion, it may remove that which hinders the *Sensibility* of the Soul, or prevents the Divine Light's acting upon it, but it can do no more.

Every Creature, as such, is by the Necessity of its Nature, in a State of *Poverty* and *Want*, and may be defin'd to be only a *Capacity* to receive so much Good as shall be communicated to it, or impress'd upon it. Were not this the State of our Souls, it would not be the State of our Bodies; and as the Body stands in this World in Poverty and Want, only *capable* of being fed, nourished, comforted and blessed by Communications and Impressions from the Things that surround it, so the Soul stands in the same Poverty and Want in the spiritual World, and *only capable* of being nourished, comforted, and blessed by Communications and Impressions from God.

Now the *Freedom* of the Will, is not a Freedom *from* Communications and Impressions,

fions, but is only a Liberty of *chusing* to be made happy, either by yielding ourselves up to the *Attraction* or *Operation* of God upon us, or to be miserable, by yielding ourselves up to the *Impressions* of the World, and sensible Things.

F I N I S.

